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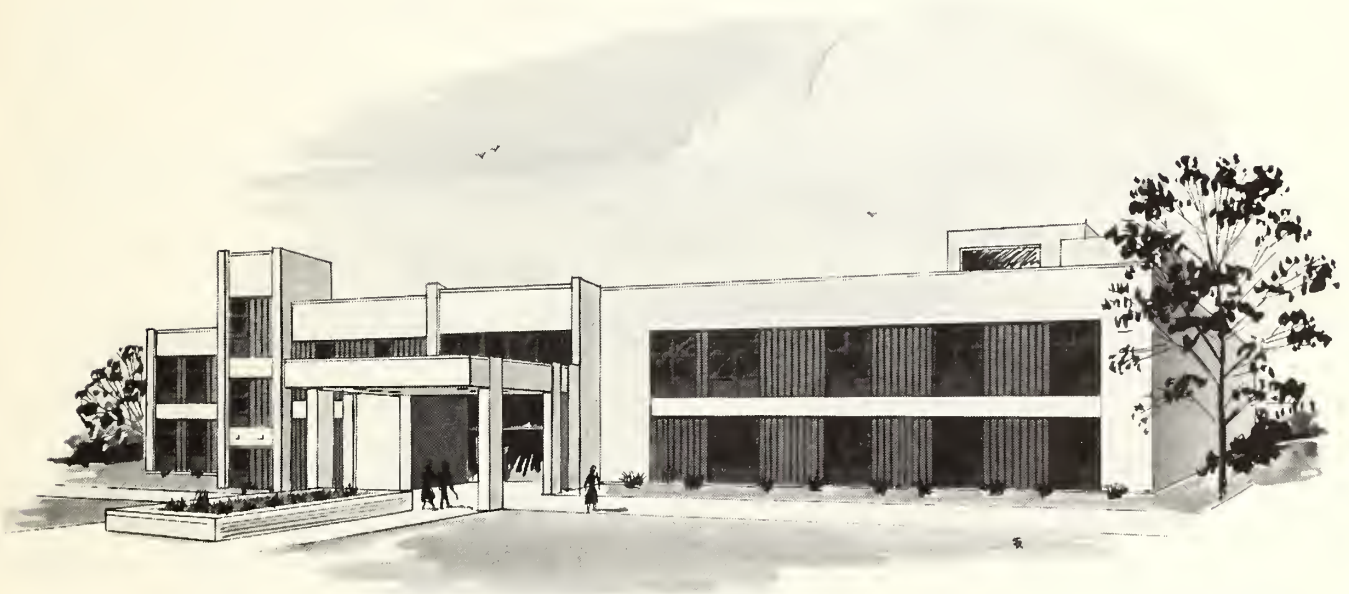








# *NAT-CENT NEWS*



Published 3 times a year by:

Helen Keller National Center for Deaf-Blind Youths and Adults

111 Middle Neck Rd.

Sands Point, N.Y. 11050

Tel.: Area Code 516 -944-8900

Operated by The Industrial Home for the Blind

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Editorial Assistant — Elizabeth Barger

Vol. 13 No. 2

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## EDITORIAL

BAHRAIN, 1983

By Robert J. Smithdas, L.H.D., Litt.D.

As Chairman of the Committee on Services to the Deaf-Blind of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind, it gives me great pleasure to announce that the Third International Conference on Deaf-Blindness will be held in Bahrain, the Middle East, November 5-8, 1983. This Conference will be held under the patronage of the government of Bahrain, and hosted by the Regional Bureau of the Committee for the Welfare of the Blind, the president of which is Sheikh Abdullah M. Al-Ghanim of Saudi Arabia.

The theme of the Conference will be "Science and Technology," and will cover a wide range of topics dealing with current and future scientific and technological advances of special interest to deaf-blind people throughout the world. Some of the subjects that will be presented will include existing aids and devices for the deaf-blind,

the latest developments in medical research, new advances in optical aids and hearing aids, the use of guide dogs by the deaf-blind, telecommunication, and orientation and mobility for the deaf-blind, including a review of electronic mobility devices. Hopefully, all countries which currently have programs devoted to the welfare of the deaf-blind, or that are interested in establishing special services for the deaf-blind, will participate in the Conference. Many of the presenters will be deaf-blind persons.

The Conference will be limited to 100 participants, speakers and guides included, but interested persons and organizations will be welcome to attend if they make their own arrangements for accommodations. Preference will be given to deaf-blind persons and their guide/interpreters.

A discount of fifty per cent is being granted by Saudi Airlines and Gulf Air for airfares for blind and deaf-blind persons and their guides who wish to attend the

meeting. Preliminary registration forms can be obtained from Mr. Anders Arnör, Honorary Secretary-General, by those who are interested in attending. Mr. Arnör's address is: S-12288 Enskede, Stockholm, Sweden.

In order to complete final preparations for the Conference, interested organizations and individuals should arrange for registration, travel, and accommodations at least seven months before the scheduled date of the meeting.

Science and technology have contributed tremendously to modern society by improving every aspect of human life. Now we need to learn, through this Third International Conference, how they can improve the lives of deaf-blind people everywhere by providing the tools and means of achieving greater confidence and freedom.



## SPECIAL NOTICE TO NAT-CENT READERS

For thirteen years the Helen Keller National Center has published NAT-CENT NEWS a quarterly newsletter for and about deaf-blind people, special services available to them, and items of special interest to the deaf-blind population and professional workers devoted to the welfare of the deaf-blind. Now, regrettably, due to rising printing costs and postal rates, in addition to budgetary restrictions, it is necessary to reduce publication of NAT-CENT NEWS to three issues per year. Beginning with this current issue, NAT-CENT NEWS will be published in January, May, and September.

Despite this necessary cutback in publication, we hope to maintain the high level of quality and interest that has won so many friends for NAT-CENT NEWS throughout the United States and several foreign countries. We are deeply grateful to our readers for their encouraging comments and advice; and we hope that NAT-CENT NEWS will

continue to grow and serve as a source of inspiration and information.

## RECREATION AT THE CENTER

By Joseph McNulty

Residence Supervisor, HKNC

The recreation program at the Helen Keller National Center is considered by its administration and staff as one of the most important areas at the Center. Directed by the Center's recreation specialist, Larry Mattei, it is designed to meet the interests and needs of the clients and to ensure maximum participation and enjoyment during evenings and weekends when other activities are slow.

For the client who has recently experienced a loss of vision, recreation provides an opportunity to learn how to adapt the activities he has always participated in so that he can continue to enjoy them when he returns home. For the client who comes to the Center from an institutional setting

where he or she has been sheltered from what we consider common, everyday events, a walk in the park to feed the ducks, or a day at the beach, can be a unique experience.



A fishing expedition resulted in a good catch for HKNC client Andrew Stender.

During the week, recreation follows a set schedule of activities: Tuesday night, captioned movies; Wednesday night, swimming; Thursday night, participation in a local deaf recreation program; and Friday night is for bowling. The weekend program is much more flexible and is usually taken up by special events.

Recent activities have included a tubing trip down the Delaware River, ferry rides across Long Island Sound, beach and fishing



outings, dances given by local blind and/or deaf organizations, and sightseeing trips to the Statue of Liberty, the Empire State Building, and Chinatown.



Ready to leave for an outing, this group of HKNC clients and volunteers poses with Larry Mattei, Recreation Director (front row, center).

An additional and most important benefit that results from these trips and outings is that the clients have an opportunity to interact with the general public. This interaction has been instrumental in breaking down many of the misconceptions that the hearing and sighted population has regarding deaf-blind people.

And last—but not least—recreation is fun!

## FIELD NOTES

By Dean Wyrick, M.S., C.R.C.

National Field Services Supervisor

The Field Services Department of the Helen Keller National Center is increasing its efforts for the employment of deaf-blind persons throughout the country. In preparation for expansion in this area, the Center's regional representatives, placement specialist, and national field services supervisor participated in a concentrated training session in St. Louis, Missouri, in October, 1982. This training was conducted by special arrangement with Louis Viecegli of Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, and included actual contact with several potential employers of deaf-blind workers. Different approaches to placement were reviewed and discussed, including Projects with Industry, industrial machine shops, sales and marketing, placement in government agencies, professional and technical placement, hiring practices of management, and job information.

It was agreed that special emphasis on job placement of deaf-blind persons is required during times when costs, inflation, and unemployment in the country are at such high levels.

\*\*\*\*\*

Currently, the Rehabilitation Services Administration and the Helen Keller National Center are coordinating efforts to establish a foundation from which vocational rehabilitation and independent living services for the deaf-blind can be improved and expanded nationally. Specific goals and strategies are being planned which will be put into action during the upcoming year. This effort will undoubtedly have a significant impact on the human services field by highlighting the challenge of increased numbers of deaf-blind persons reaching adulthood and needing services, and assuring services to those deaf-blind adults who have not yet realized their full potential. Toward this goal, a tri-regional conference scheduled early in November, 1982, by RSA Regions VIII, IX, and



X, was held in Sacramento, California. Other conferences are being planned and scheduled for early 1983.

## BEARING HANDICAPS REVEALS OUR METTLE

By Bill McDonald, Staff Writer

(Reprinted with permission of THE STATE, a publication of Columbia Newspapers, Inc., Columbia, South Carolina)

Handicaps. We all have them—whether they are minor psychological aberrations or physical disabilities. They are as common to U.S. Presidents as hand-to-mouth bums. The most devout man I know is deathly afraid of flying—to him, "It's an annoying handicap."

Perhaps no one ever suffered a greater handicap as a public servant than Abe Lincoln, whose spells of melancholy (or depression) often rendered him mute.

The manner in which we bear our handicaps says something about our mettle. Some people born to riches are genuinely handicapped by



boredom. And yet I have known severely handicapped people who are as jolly as Santa Claus.

Consider Sylvester Alexander, a 43 year old Columbian. Napoleon said, "He who fears being conquered is sure of defeat." I wonder if even the great Napoleon faced adversity with the same grace and dignity as Alexander.

Born deaf, he worked for 21 years as a shoe repairman and later as a kitchen helper until he lost his eyesight.

Most folks would have wallowed in their misery and self-pity. Alexander went for help to the S.C. Commission for the Blind and the Commission sent him to the Helen Keller National Center for Deaf-Blind in New York for rehabilitation.

Alexander was soon traveling alone on the Big Apple's subways and buses—and rather enjoying it.

Shakespeare said, "Sweet are the uses of adversity." Alexander is now back in town, maintaining his own apartment—a model of



(Photo courtesy of S.C. Commission for the Blind)  
Sylvester Alexander (r) discusses his training program with Whit Springfield,  
Project Supervisor of the Rehab Center.

independence. He grocery shops without professional help. He rides a city bus each morning to the Commission's Rehabilitation Center where he operates table saws to help make wooden hanging baskets. He also works at the Commission's greenhouse, transplanting seedlings and preparing vegetables and ornamental plants for sale.

So productive is he that the Commission is now contacting employers about a job.

"But jobs are hard to find," a spokesman

acknowledges. "It's not because of Sylvester's handicap, though; it's the job market.

Last summer, Alexander had his heart set on attending the national convention of the American Association of the Deaf-Blind at Greeley, Colorado. The cost of sending him and an interpreter to that national gathering of deaf-blind people was made possible by generous contributions of interested townspeople from his community. He took one of his latest creations, a hanging plant propagation basket, as evidence of how he was overcoming his handicaps. It's a step, says the Commission, toward his becoming financially independent.

### LIBRARY NOTES

By Gertrude Queen

HKNC Librarian

The library at the Helen Keller National Center has recently obtained two new acquisitions dealing with deaf-blindness.

The first is a comprehensive study of



deaf-blindness, UNDERSTANDING AND EDUCATING THE DEAF-BLIND/SEVERELY AND PROFOUNDLY HANDICAPPED. Edited by Sara R. Walsh and Robert Holzberg, the book is published by Charles C. Thomas, Springfield, Illinois, copyright 1981.

The second is a set of nine manuals edited by Ann Stoddard and Patrick Maher of the Mountain-Plains Regional Center for Services to Deaf-Blind Children, published in 1981. The nine manuals deal with specific subjects, as follows:

1. Resources in Programming - Mildly Multi-handicapped Deaf-Blind
2. Readings in Programming - Mildly Multi-handicapped Deaf-Blind
3. Resources in Programming - Moderately Multihandicapped Deaf-Blind
4. Readings in Programming - Moderately Multihandicapped Deaf-Blind
5. Resources in Programming - Severely Multihandicapped Deaf-Blind



6. Readings in Programming - Severely Multihandicapped Deaf-Blind
7. Resources in Programming - Medical/Personal Care Deaf-Blind
8. Readings in Programming - Medical/Personal Care Deaf-Blind
9. Overview Readings in Programming

## THE ADJUSTMENT PROCESS AT THE CENTER

By Laura J. Thomas

Rehabilitation Counselor, HKNC

At the Helen Keller National Center there is a very diversified population of clients with varying degrees of hearing and visual impairment. Clients come to the Center with widely different family, educational, social, and occupational backgrounds. Some clients have had close contacts with their families; others have led isolated lives. Some have had extensive schooling, while others have not. There are clients who have been employed for a long time, and others who were employed only for short

periods of time or never employed at all.

Each client, upon arrival at the Center, goes through a unique adjustment process. Many changes occur which may be beneficial, disturbing, or without much effect, depending on the individual client. Some clients may experience homesickness and yearn to be with their loved ones. Others, who have led isolated lives, may feel grateful for being at the Center, surrounded by persons who can communicate with them. Most are eager to establish friendships with their peers.

Many clients need to become accustomed to certain rules and regulations at the residence and training building. Some clients experience difficulty in adjusting to these rules after having led independent lives for a period of time.

For many clients, it's their first contact with hearing and visually impaired individuals. Meeting others who have similar problems and frustrations gives them the feeling that they are not alone. Some

clients initially respond negatively to the multitude of problems faced by those who are totally deaf-blind, but exposure through contact may bring some of them to realization of their own condition.

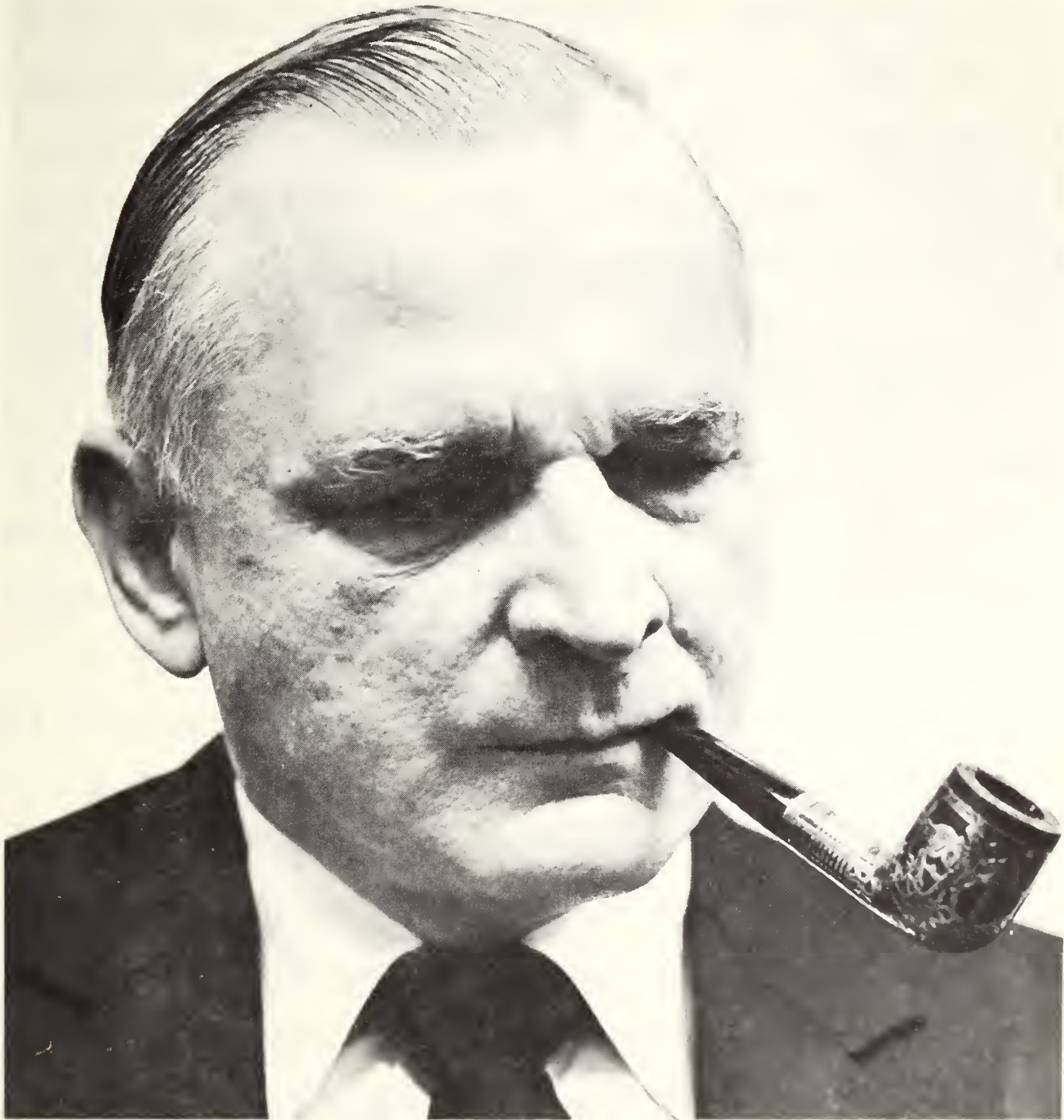
With the supportive staff at the Helen Keller National Center, the adjustment process is made easier. Rehabilitation counselors, social workers, instructors and residence workers have continual contact with clients and problems are dealt with in a sensitive manner.

In summary, the adjustment process may be brief for some clients, longer for others. But with the comprehensive program of training and evening and weekend activities, supported by understanding staff persons, a client can begin to feel comfortable and confident.



SHARED BEAUTY

By Barbara Hausman



Robert J. Smithdas

(Photo by John F. Meehan)

SHARED BEAUTY is a limited edition of poetry written by Robert J. Smithdas. Bound in hard covers, the book is a collection of



poems which have appeared in NAT-CENT NEWS during the past thirteen years, and includes a few new poems hitherto unpublished.

To quote from the book's Introduction, written by Virginia R. Terris, "The title of this volume—SHARED BEAUTY—is a fitting one, for each poem in it is a sharing of, a reaching out toward, lovely things we all too often pass over and forget. There is a communication of deeply felt emotion not only for the natural world about us—its birds, flowers and rainbows—but also for the people in it—a poet, a farmer and not least, a lover—all of whom Robert J. Smithdas writes of with compassion and understanding."

Bob Smithdas says of the poems in this volume, "They were written because they were there and sang themselves into existence."

SHARED BEAUTY is available from Portal Press, 10 Marino Avenue, Port Washington, New York, 11050. The price is \$8.98, plus \$1.00 for postage and handling if ordered by mail. New York State residents should include sales tax.

## A PART OF THE DEAF COMMUNITY

By Jack Wright

(Reprinted with permission of THE DEAF AMERICAN. From Vol. 34, No. 8, 1982)

I am writing this article for The Deaf American because I want to share some of my experiences with deaf people. I feel this will help deaf people understand deaf-blindness and feel more comfortable being with deaf-blind people. Many deaf people know very little about deaf-blindness, and are very apprehensive about approaching a deaf-blind person, let alone becoming friends with one.

For 20 years, I was a deaf person in the Deaf Community. I attended the Virginia School for the Deaf, and enjoyed going to clubs, dances, homecomings and football games. At that time I did not have any problems with my vision, and in fact I never thought about it. By the time I was 20, I had some night blindness and started losing my peripheral vision, but I was not aware

that I had any serious condition.

Over the next 15 years, my vision continued to deteriorate to the point where I could no longer ignore it. I was working as an engraver and I started to miss words when I was reading. The boss noticed I was having problems measuring, and sent me to see an eye doctor. The doctor told me I was legally blind and that my vision would get worse. He told me there was no treatment that could help me. It was not until much later that I found out I had a condition known as Usher's Syndrome—congenital deafness coupled with the progressive loss of vision due to Retinitis Pigmentosa. I felt my life was starting to go down the drain when the doctor told me I was legally blind. When my boss got the doctor's report, he told me to start looking for another job, because I would be fired in 30 days.

I started to worry about what would happen to me. I didn't know anyone who had my problem. I didn't know where to go for help. In addition, I had a wife and two



children to support, and I had to find another job.



Jack and Julia Wright

I went to the unemployment agency, but when they learned I was deaf and had a vision problem, they referred me to the Virginia Commission for the Visually Handicapped. The counselor there suggested that I go to Jamaica. "Oh, wow!" I thought, "Jamaica Islands! That's

great!" But the counselor explained that there was a training school for blind and deaf-blind persons in Jamaica, New York.

I went to this training facility, but three months later decided to leave. I did not feel they were really helping me. I was also worried about my family. With the help of my counselor, I finally found a job near my home, working in a hospital laundry.



Over the next few years I started having problems seeing signs; I often had to touch the person's hands in order to follow what they were signing. I also could not recognize faces or read regular print. The only part of the newspaper I could read was the headlines. I felt my means of obtaining information slipping away. I felt more and more cut off from the world.

In 1975, I had a cataract operation which improved my vision somewhat. I could now read large-print and could read peoples' handwriting if they used a dark pen.

That same year I was divorced and went home to live with my parents. I was very uncomfortable with this situation because I had always been independent. But I did not know how to travel alone, cook or shop, and I had no knowledge of Braille. My vision began to deteriorate again and I became very depressed. I knew I had to do something, so when a counselor suggested I try a new training program for the deaf-blind in New York, I packed my bags and left.

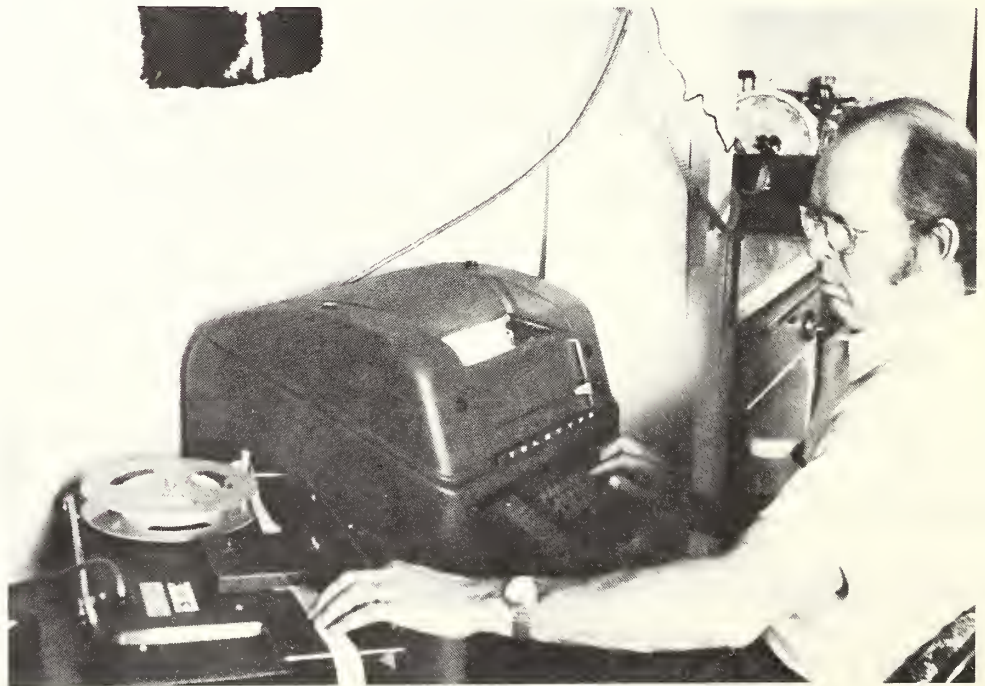
The Helen Keller National Center for Deaf-Blind Youths and Adults (HKNC) had begun in 1969, and in 1976 opened a new training center in Sands Point, New York, on Long Island not too far from New York City.

There, I studied Braille, cooking, cane travel, and learned how to play games that had been adapted for the visually handicapped, such as Scrabble. I also improved my ability to read signs by touch. I am very happy I learned all these things, especially Braille, for I now feel I am no longer cut off from the rest of the world. I can read Braille magazines and books, and keep up with what is going on in the world. I also have a Braille TTY, so that I can now communicate with others by telephone.

I am independent again, but I do have one problem: some deaf people avoid me. They are afraid I will become dependent upon them, and are unsure what to do in such a situation. They are used to using their sight in communication with others, and they cannot understand how a person who is blind

can communicate in signs.

In social situations, I cannot see who is nearby, so I can't approach a person and start a conversation. I must rely on other people to come up to me and introduce themselves, or other people. Introductions are important to me because that is the only way I can meet new people. This is the most difficult problem I have socially because I love to meet new people, from different places, and to have conversations with them. I love to communicate, get information and share ideas.



Jack at braille tty/tdd

(Photo by Julia Wright)



Whenever a person approaches me, it is important that they give me their name or their name sign so that I know with whom I am chatting. Sometimes people sign very slowly, thinking I will not understand them. However, I prefer that they sign at a speed that is comfortable for them, for then the conversation is more relaxed for both of us. It is not necessary for them to shorten sentences or simplify language. It is hard for some people to believe that I can understand as much Sign Language by touch as I once did by sight, but this is true. Some people fingerspell so slowly that I just give up! One friend fingerspells with his arm stretched above my head, and I have trouble reaching that high to follow him. Some people use only fingerspelling when they communicate with me. While there are deaf-blind people who prefer to use only fingerspelling, I like to use Sign Language because it is the language I grew up with and the method of communication most comfortable to me.



Another problem is that many people feel I will injure myself in a strange place and are afraid to have me go with them. I love to go fishing, but one friend refused to take me, saying it was too dangerous. Some of my old friends continued to include me in their activities, even after I lost my vision. That is because they had had some experience with other deaf-blind people, and were not afraid to stay with me. But others started worrying about my mobility—how to tell me about steps, how to guide me to a chair, and so on. I explained to them how to help me, and they quickly learned how to guide, and found it was not so difficult after all. A deaf-blind person with the proper training and experience in using mobility techniques has very few problems getting around.

I now feel I am an independent traveler. I feel confident traveling by bus, train or plane. I write notes to ask people for help if I need it. I can tell from their reactions what their emotions are. If they

seem confused, or do not understand, then I look for another person. Sometimes I meet a person who can't read—then I'm in trouble! I ask people to print in the palm of my hand with their finger, or I use the Tellytouch machine for receptive communication. When I take the bus home from work, I show the driver a card that tells him where I wish to get off, and he taps my leg at the right stop. I just have to trust him. Sometimes, of course, things will go wrong, just as they will for anyone. But the more experience I get, the fewer the problems, and the better able I am to deal with them if they do occur.

I do not subscribe to many magazines because I cannot read print. I do receive one weekly news magazine, and several monthly or quarterly magazines, which come out in Braille. These magazines focus on the needs of blind people, with almost nothing included on deafness or deaf people. Deaf-blind people are not informed about what is going on since very little information is available

in Braille or large-print. The only way I can learn about deafness, about equipment designed to assist deaf people, activities open to deaf people—in general, the Deaf Community—is to ask friends. This puts me at a great disadvantage. When someone asks me why I did not attend a special event, I have to explain that I simply did not know it was being held. Deaf people know amongst themselves what is going on in the Deaf Community, but a deaf-blind person has a great difficulty in finding out. Many deaf-blind people stay home alone simply because they do not know what is going on.

I am eager to have deaf people inform deaf-blind people, in their own magazines, what is going on in the Deaf Community. For example, club news or notices of special events for deaf people could be included in The Voice, Good Cheer, Nat-Cent News and other magazines to which deaf-blind people subscribe. I would also like to suggest the development of a regular column in The Deaf American on the activities of deaf-blind



people. This would encourage deaf people to participate in these activities and make it a two-way participation effort.

Many people feel that deaf-blind people cannot take part in activities such as card games. But they can—I am an expert game player! Several years ago, the California State Chess Championship for the Deaf was won by a deaf-blind person—and the runner-up was also deaf-blind. Quite a few games have been adapted for play by touch, such as chess, checkers and dominoes.

I also enjoy such activities as fishing, bowling, swimming, roller-skating, and I would love to try skiing. I love to join deaf people participating in these activities because it is so easy for me to communicate with people who know Sign Language. But many people feel that I will become a burden, or will slow them down.

For 10 years I was an enthusiastic member of a bowling league for deaf people. I did very well and had some of the highest scores until my vision deteriorated. My

scores started to get lower and lower, and I felt the other team members would blame me for a low average score, so I quit. This past year I joined a bowling league for blind people. I really enjoyed the bowling, and the people were very nice, but there was no one there with whom I could communicate directly, so I quit in frustration. I feel really stuck in the middle—my score is not really high enough to compete in the league for deaf people, and I am often unable to communicate directly with blind people. I find that this carries over into other areas as well.

In the workshop where I am now employed, I have very little communication with others. Most of the people communicate with me by printing in my palm, but they confine the communication to just a few very short sentences, such as "Where do you live?" Then I have to write the answer for them to read. Some of the people are visually handicapped, and cannot read print, so I cannot communicate with them at all unless Braille writing

equipment is available. One rehabilitation teacher does know Sign Language, and a few other people know some fingerspelling, so I do have some communication opportunities, but not very often.



Jack at work - caning a chair.

(Photo by Julia Wright)

While in training at the HKNC in 1977, I was going through a very difficult time of adjustment in my life. It was at this time that I met a young woman who became a very important part of my life. Julia helped me in so many ways, including giving me a kick in the pants when I need it! We were married in June of 1981, and we are very happy together. Julia, who is sighted and hearing, is a fluent signer so communication is not



a problem. She has also learned Braille and copies material for me when necessary. However, I try not to be dependent upon her, for I want to stand tall in her eyes as she does in mine.

And I do have much to be thankful for. I very much enjoy my work caning chairs at home, and I hope someday to start my own chair caning business. I have many friends and live an active and enjoyable life.

I have tried to share with you some of my personal experiences that I hope will help you to understand deaf-blind people a little better. I would like to encourage deaf people to be friendly with deaf-blind people and to try to find ways of including deaf-blind people in your activities. Remember that we are deaf people, too, and we would be happy to join with other deaf people and become a part of the Deaf Community.

(Jack Wright has his own chair-caning business in Glen Burnie, Maryland.)

## ONE MARVELOUS DAY AT HKNC

By Sr. Bernadette Wynne

Coordinator, National Training Team

Monday, December 6, 1982 began as an ordinary day and developed into a very extraordinary one. A group of ten deaf-blind people with seven guides and interpreters arrived from Finland. There were handshakes, warm smiles and a hearty welcome to HKNC.

The group was eager to meet American deaf-blind people and communicate with them. They were inspired by Bob Smithdas and were determined to overcome the language barriers in order to communicate with our clients. Ten of our clients were invited to join the group in the residence lounge. With great hesitation they came. Once the two groups were "paired off" the interest and desire to communicate crumbled the barriers and names were exchanged, differences in signs and fingerspelling were tried and information gleaned about the new Finnish friends.

We watched in amazement.

HKNC client Charlie Pope  
converses with Malla,  
one of our visitors  
from Sweden.



Another feature attraction was the roller skating rink. Due to the long winters and great quantity of snow in Finland, roller skating has not been part of their experience. A few of the fellows were daring enough to take a spin around the rink and loved it.

Although time was limited, they were able to tour the Center and explore the aids and devices used for communication in America. It was a marvelous day for everyone and we sent them off with best wishes for a safe trip as they headed south to visit Disneyland.



## WORTH REMEMBERING

By Barbara Hausman

Assistant Director of Community Education



Santa Claus appeared at the annual Christmas Party and delighted everyone, including HKNC Client Robert Kern, of Philadelphia, Pa.

It was planned as the "Annual Christmas Party," but it was really an afternoon filled with warmth and love, and a time of laughter, joy and even surprises.

On Wednesday, Dec. 14th, HKNC clients, staff, community volunteers and some forty students and teachers from the local high school gathered together.

While mingling in the foyer of the Training Building, the waiting guests

received Christmas boutonneires, designed by the clients, and distributed by Stacy Weiss, Arts and Crafts Assistant Instructor.

The festivities began with a presentation of gifts from the Schreiber High School Sophomore Learning Community. Recreational items had been purchased for the clients by the young people, with monies they had earned during several fund-raising projects--like pretzel sales and car washes. A portion of the biblical Christmas story was read by Joe McNulty, Residence Director, and Sister Bernadette Wynne discussed the meaning of the Christmas spirit.

Diane Goldberg, staff interpreter, resplendent in her bright red shirt, signed throughout the program and led all the participants in a singing-signing song fest. Old favorites like "White Christmas" and "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" were followed by a swinging "Jingle Bell Rock" and an original rendition of "The 12 Days of Christmas." The audience responded with sheer delight to Mike Van Orman's portrayal



of "6 Geese-a-Laying" and Brian McCarroll's enchanting "3 French Hens."



Client Jerry Gibson was assigned the task of trimming the top of the Christmas tree.



HKNC Volunteer Jinny Mohn signed the words of the popular Christmas song "Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer" for Michelle Smithdas (r).



Following a brief intermission, caroling continued in the Residence Cafeteria. Fruit and nuts donated by the Port Washington Lions Club, and home baked cookies and punch were quickly consumed. And then, suddenly—a sparkling, rotund, red-garbed St. Nicholas appeared. Fingers and voices questioned—"Who is it?" Jack Barnett, a deaf-blind client, was not recognizable. Yet this Santa seemed to be well-experienced as he distributed individually wrapped presents, donated by the Sands Point Garden Club, chatted with each fellow client, and even bounced a person or two on his ample lap.

Everyone was content. Seeing-hearing, deaf-blind, young and old people had shared a special experience. Isn't this what Yuletide spirit is all about?

A VERY HAPPY AND HEALTHY NEW YEAR  
TO ALL OUR READERS!

## NEW YEAR

I have resolved again this year  
to mend my ways and deftly steer  
my fate, whatever may befall—  
I will not flinch; I will stand tall  
with sturdy will and conscience clear.

As always, with unbounded cheer  
I feel that I can engineer  
all things, however great or small,  
I have resolved.

But in a little while, I fear,  
my good intentions disappear  
and all my ardor starts to pall:  
my heart relents and cancels all  
I have resolved!

— Robert J. Smithdas







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## EDITORIAL

## THE NEED FOR SENSITIVITY

By Robert J. Smithdas, L.H.D., Litt.D.

Rehabilitation of the handicapped is not just a process of adjustment in which a disabled individual is taught techniques and methods that will help him overcome the limiting effects of severe disabilities—it is also a positive philosophy. Essentially, that philosophy implies that most handicapped persons have potentials that can be developed and used, and that the goal of rehabilitation is to assist them in realizing a maximum degree of emotional, psychological, social, vocational, and economic functioning.

But system and philosophy are not enough. Professional workers in the field of rehabilitation must be sensitive to the strengths and weaknesses of each client, and realize that every individual differs from others in skills, attitudes, needs and wants.

Deaf-blindness is one of the severest

handicaps known to mankind, and the dependence of deaf-blind people is probably greater than that of other groups of disabled persons because of the unique problems of communication and mobility this dual disability creates. Yet it has been substantially proven in recent years that deaf-blind men and women, when provided opportunities for appropriate training and self-expression, can attain measures of independence and self-reliance formerly considered impossible for them. Though still dependent on society for certain services, they are clearly demonstrating that they can contribute productively to their communities.

As important as method and philosophy are in the rehabilitation process, professional workers must also realize that the best results are obtained by being sensitive to their clients as individuals. Sensitivity involves the ability to understand the level of a client's functioning, and to establish a warm, constructive relationship that lets the client know that the worker cares and

is concerned for his well-being. It is the human factor that tells a deaf-blind client, even when language is a barrier to communication, that he is understood and appreciated, and encourages him to strive for success through his own efforts.

The Chinese have an apt phrase to describe sensitivity: mind sum, the understanding heart—a quality that is vital to all of us.

## NEW WORK EXPERIENCES AT HKNC

By Melissa Raue

HKNC Placement Specialist

The Work Experience Program at HKNC offers clients the opportunity to experience various jobs on a part time basis. This experience serves two purposes. The first is for clients to try different jobs to see if they enjoy them and to experience what it is like to work. The second purpose is to help them get another job after HKNC. Employers like to have someone who has already worked



and proved that he is a good worker.

The counselors at HKNC have developed some new work experience sites, as well as designed some individual programs. The Twin Pines Food Co-op has had Billy Miller working with them. Billy puts prices on the packages, cleans the shelves, stocks supplies, and weighs packages. Even though Billy does not have a large signed vocabulary, his boss Edna Turner and he understand each other just fine. Billy enjoyed this work very much and would like to get another store helper job now that he is home in Altoona, Pennsylvania. His replacement at the Food Co-op is Andrew Inverne.

An individual work experience was designed for Jerry Gibson. Jerry worked in the HKNC Accounting Department. He did our client payroll, the food inventory, and calculated the client work payments. He already knew how to do this kind of work, since he had been a bookkeeper for four years in South Dakota.



HKNC Client Kevin Anderson sorts and delivers mail to the various offices at the Center.

Staffing and maintaining their coffee lounges provides work experience for HKNC Clients. Here - Steven Price prepares coffee for the morning break.



Client Frank Newman served as an efficient helper in the kitchen as part of his work experience program.

Jerry left this work experience to try another one in the research department of the town library. Here he does different kinds of filing. He had to learn some special library filing systems to do this. He also processes the books that were borrowed. After Jerry returned from Christmas Holiday in South Dakota, he also tried a work experience running an addressograph machine for the church. Trying all these different things helps a person to know for himself what kind of environment and what kind of work tasks are best for him.

HKNC has also had clients in the linen department of St. Francis Hospital. Annie Thomas is one of them. After Annie went home to Las Vegas, the placement specialist was able to tell employers that Annie had experience in this kind of work and show them a letter from Annie's supervisor recommending her. Excited by this proof of her good work, four employers asked to interview Annie for jobs at their hospital!

After talking to these employers and



practicing some interview techniques with her local counselor, Annie accepted a job in a nursing home and started working there February 25th.

Monica Noyes took Annie's place at St. Francis. When the placement specialist went to Monica's home state, Vermont, to look for a job for Monica, prospective employers were interested in hearing about her work experience. They were happy to hear positive evidence that she is a good worker and a pleasant person to have around. Monica left HKNC on April 1st and started a job tryout on April 5th in a Vermont food service.

We are very pleased at HKNC with the development of the work experience program. This is a valuable program that lets local employers borrow some of our clients and see for themselves how good a deaf-blind worker can be. The client/worker gets the chance to try out some jobs in a real work environment. This builds confidence, increases knowledge and helps in deciding on future work. We look forward to the continued

expansion of this program.

## NEW COURSE FOR MASTERS DEGREE PROGRAM

Dr. Richard Hoover, Chief of Ophthalmology at the Greater Baltimore Medical Center (GBMC), has joined the Helen Keller National Center-Western Maryland College Masters Degree Program on deaf-blindness as a lecturer. He and Drs. Rachid Aouchiche and James Comber have developed a comprehensive course: The Eye—Its Anatomy, Function, and Disorders.

Dr. Hoover is well known in the field of blindness for his innovative development of long-cane travel techniques prior to entering the field of ophthalmology. As an ophthalmologist, he taught at Johns Hopkins Hospital, and is presently Chairman of Medical Education at GBMC. He has always been a strong advocate of the use of low vision aids.

A series of lectures on the anatomy, function, and disorders of the eye will be given by Drs. Aouchiche and Comber, who have completed residency at GBMC. Three lectures

concerning the problems of low vision will be presented by Mr. J. Deremeik and Mrs. A. Habel, low vision specialists in the field of Physiological Optics. Dr. Herman Goldberg will lecture on related Learning Disabilities

This required three-credit course will be offered at Western Maryland College, Westminster, Maryland, July 21 to August 20, and is in addition to the courses, "A Rehabilitation Approach for Deaf-Blind Adults" and "Comprehensive Course in Communication for Deaf-Blind Adults."

A limited number of scholarships are available for the Masters Program on deaf-blindness. For further information, contact:

Office of Graduate Studies  
Western Maryland College  
Westminster, MD 21157  
(301) 848-7000 TTY/Voice

or

Sister Bernadette Wynne  
Helen Keller National Center  
111 Middle Neck Rd.  
Sands Point, NY 11050  
(516) 944-8900 TTY/Voice



## HELEN KELLER STAFFERS WIN AWARDS FROM ARROWS, LIONS

(Reprinted with permission of THE PORT  
WASHINGTON NEWS)



Left to right in above photo are: Jack Weber, past District Governor, Nassau Lions; Michelle Smithdas; Jules Cote, Associate Director, HKNC; Robert J. Smithdas; John Schroeder, Account Executive of the N.Y. Arrows.

Two staff members from the Helen Keller National Center for Deaf-Blind Youths and Adults in Port Washington recently received awards from the New York Arrows soccer team and the Nassau County Lions Clubs. Robert Smithdas, director of community education at the center, and his wife Michelle, an assistant instructor, both deaf and blind, were cited for their "outstanding personal

achievement and invaluable service to vision and hearing impaired populations" in a ceremony at the Nassau Coliseum.

Robert Smithdas, deaf-blind since he was four, was graduated cum laude from St. John's University and was the first deaf-blind person to earn a master's degree which he received in 1953 from New York University.

In addition to three honorary degrees, Smithdas has received many special awards, including the Anne Sullivan Macy Gold Medal Award, Gallaudet College's Alice Cogswell Award, and citation as Handicapped American of the Year in 1965 by the President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped, of which he is a member.

He was elected chairman of the Committee on Services to the Deaf-Blind of the World Council for Welfare of the Blind in 1981, and was one of the founders of the Helen Keller Center, the first national rehabilitation training program for deaf-blind persons.

Named poet of the year in 1961 by the Poetry Society of America, Smithdas recently

published his second anthology of poetry "Shared Beauty." His autobiography, "Life at My Fingertips" was published in 1958, and his first poetry collection, "City of the Heart," followed in 1966.

Michelle Smithdas was born with defective hearing and became profoundly deaf when she was 16. During her senior year at Gallaudet College she was injured in a snowmobile accident and lost her sight. Despite this loss, she earned her B.A. with a major in math from Gallaudet in December, 1971.

The following year she entered the rehabilitation training program at the Helen Keller Center, where she became a professional trainee, earned graduate credits at New York University and Hofstra, and was later hired as an instructor's aide.

She and Smithdas were married in 1975 and now live in their own home in Port Washington. She was treasurer and then board member of the American Association of the Deaf-Blind, International Year of Disabled Persons national delegate in 1981, a guest



lecturer at schools and conferences around the country, a witness at several Congressional hearings, and a guest on several television shows.

After receiving her award, Michelle said, "I feel honored and happy to receive this award ... I never dreamed that the work I have been doing to help others overcome the difficulties I overcame in life as a deaf-blind person would receive such recognition. This award encourages me to continue the work I am doing at the Helen Keller National Center ... and to help others."

Robert Smithdas added, "I feel deeply honored to receive this award. It will always remind me that my success in overcoming the problems of life is largely due to the encouragement and assistance I have been given by others—my family, teachers, and friends.

"It will also remind me that those of us who are successful have an obligation to serve others who are less fortunate. Thank you for this special recognition, which tells

me that as long as there is love and understanding, human beings will have the courage to succeed."

Port Washington Lions Club past president Henry Grant said, "These two remarkable people are an inspiration for persons around the world." He added that his club supported the development production, and purchase of the Tactile Communicator, an innovative device for the deaf-blind and deaf populations.



Among HKNC spectators at the game were (l. to r., bottom row): Volunteer Joanne Colletta (2nd from l.), Kevin Anderson, Susan Barlow, Merline Chambers, Sue Suggs, Chris DeMeo, Cathy Vida and Doug Karn.

Mr. Jack Weber, past District governor of Nassau Lions and candidate for International Director of Lions International, commented, "Our cooperative efforts were a prime example of how Lionism works best, and the Smithdas's lifestyles exemplify the goals we set, since Lions are the senior philanthropic organization that supports services for vision and hearing impaired people world-wide.

### FIELD NOTES

By Dean Wyrick, M.S., G.R.C.

National Field Services Coordinator

A Model State Plan for the Deaf-Blind was the theme of a meeting held in Little Rock, Arkansas, March 14-16, 1983. It was sponsored by Rehabilitation Services Administration, Region VI, the Arkansas Research and Training Center on Deafness, the Rehabilitation Continuing Education Program, the South-Central Regional Program (Center) for Deaf-Blind Children, and the Helen Keller National Center. Initially, the meeting was



directed toward the role of state vocational rehabilitation programs in servicing deaf-blind persons. However, it soon expanded to include the concept of a cooperative approach so that programs and agencies within the state can work together and address the needs of the deaf-blind through a coordinated team effort. Strategies to use regional and national programs were also included. Dr. Douglas Watson, Ph.D., of the Arkansas Research and Training Center, Ron Brown of the South-Central Regional Center for Deaf-Blind Children, and C.C. Davis of the Helen Keller National Center coordinated sessions dealing with philosophy, personnel, vocational rehabilitation processes, independent living, special facilities, definition and population, State Advisory Committee, community development, interagency cooperation, and family services. Each session was lead by an expert on the subject and allowed input from all participants. Chapters are being written on each of the sessions and, following review by an editorial board, will be

published for distribution.

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The regional representatives of the Helen Keller National Center are undoubtedly one of the finest rehabilitation teams in the United States. They are continually seeking opportunities for improving and enhancing their knowledge and skills in work with the deaf-blind. Two examples of the kinds of training that have been selected are a one-week Total Immersion Sign Language Retreat at Camp Hemlocks in Connecticut, and a specialized ten-weeks Orientation to Deafness Program at the University of Tennessee. Mary Ellen Barbiasz, the Center's New England regional representative, participated in the sign language seminar during April where she focussed on the intermediate and advanced levels of expressive and receptive sign language and fingerspelling. This retreat afforded all participants an opportunity to increase their effectiveness in communication with regard to the delivery of quality

training services and job placement for severely disabled hearing impaired persons, and an opportunity for assessing the impact of total training services to deaf persons.

Dr. William Goodman, the Center's north-central regional representative, enrolled in the University of Tennessee's program in March, and is scheduled to complete it in early June. The program includes graduate courses in audiology and the nature of hearing impairment; communication techniques; the psychological, educational, and rehabilitation aspects of deafness; social, cultural, and occupational implications of hearing impairment; and a specialized practicum experience.

The Helen Keller National Center recognizes the importance of keeping its staff trained in areas of expertise required in serving deaf-blind people.



## DEAF/BLIND SURVEY TALLIED

(Reprinted from Guide Post - A newsletter in service to deaf Texans. From the issue of January/February, 1983.)

Very little is known about the deaf/blind population in Texas. Communication with those who live in this dark, silent world is only possible with one in four persons who are deaf/blind.

The Texas Commission for the Deaf (TCD) is compiling statistics and data from a deaf/blind survey conducted several months ago. The survey was written by the Inter-agency Task Force on Future Services for Deaf/Blind Persons. The Task Force was formed to help determine the services needed in assisting this population and is comprised of parents of deaf/blind children as well as representatives from these services agencies:

- Deaf-Blind Multihandicapped Association  
of Texas
- Helen Keller National Center
- Texas Commission for the Blind

- Texas Commission for the Deaf
- Texas Department of Health
- Texas Department of Human Resources
- Texas Department of Mental Health Mental Retardation
- Texas Education Agency
- Texas Rehabilitation Commission
- Texas School for the Blind

The deaf/blind survey is comprehensive in scope, and required effort to complete yet boasts of a 59 percent return rate.

As might have been expected due to the rubella epidemic of the 1960's, the largest percentage of surveyed persons were born between 1960-1969. The second largest group was born between 1970-1979. Fifteen of the persons surveyed were born prior to 1900. Predominantly, the individuals are male: 240 males to 179 females.

Geographically, deaf/blind persons are located across the state, but counties with 10 or more deaf/blind residents are:

Bexar County - 69 persons  
Dallas County - 32 persons  
Denton County - 13 persons  
El Paso County - 10 persons  
Fort Bend County - 17 persons  
Harris County - 35 persons  
Lubbock County - 34 persons  
Nueces County - 17 persons  
Tarrant County - 20 persons  
Travis County - 70 persons

Interestingly, there were considerable "don't know" and "no response" answers to questions in the survey. Nearly one-third of the surveyed population did not know when their hearing or visual loss was first noticed. Almost half did not know what caused the hearing loss and about 40 percent did not know the cause of the visual loss.

More than three out of four (80 percent) of the individuals surveyed were reported as having mental retardation as an additional handicapping condition. One of the questions that could arise from this unusually high



percentage is whether deaf/blind persons have been labelled mentally retarded so that they could be institutionalized. As valid IQ tests have not yet been developed for deaf/blind persons, mental retardation may be more of a label for this special population than a diagnosis.

Nearly half of these persons are living in Texas Department of Mental Health Mental Retardation (MHMR) facilities. Reported levels of functioning indicate that many activities cannot be performed independently. Self-feeding was the only activity the majority of the group could perform without assistance.

Very low communication levels were reported for the deaf/blind persons surveyed. About 75 percent indicated that overall communication was severely limited. Only 28 percent are able to communicate their name and "no communication" was reported for 40 percent of the individuals. Written comments regarding communication indicate a need for more training for staff and personnel

involved with these individuals.

Most of those surveyed are able to sit, stand and walk. Running and jumping are visual skills and very few are able to perform these activities.

Throughout the survey when higher functioning levels were examined, these individuals did not fare as well. When analyzing the data, however, one must consider whether or not they have had the opportunity to learn these activities.

The results of the deaf/blind survey and its implications will be better known after all statistical and data computations have been made. The survey is being programmed onto computer and complete information will be made available at a later date.

ANCHORS AWEIGH!

By Larry Mattei

Recreation Specialist

The recreation program at the Helen Keller National Center is set up for its

clients so that the activities they engage in while in training can be continued when they return to their home communities. This program runs through the entire year, with the exception of one week in early August when some clients, volunteers, and staff and the recreation specialist learn to sail.

Through a sailing program provided by the staff of the Nassau County Department of Recreation and Parks, a one-week course of sailing instruction is offered to the handicapped during the months from June to September. A variety of sailing craft is available, including board-type boats, catamarans, and small sloops, but the boat we used for learning was the Bellefour, a 54-foot Chesapeake Bay skipjack donated to the county for use by the handicapped and senior citizen population. This program has been in existence for several years and has proven very successful as an adjunct to sailing lessons for county residents. All types of individuals may take part in a number of activities tailored to their special needs, and ability



to swim is not always a requirement.

The sailing course on the Bellefour is a four-day, eight-hour program of instruction which is taught either during the daytime or in the evenings. The Bellefour course, as well as others, is designed to teach basic nautical skills and to develop an awareness of sailing as a recreational option for the handicapped community.

Last August the group from the Helen Keller National Center attended this course for the first time. For this writer, this was really a test to see how deaf-blind people would adapt to this new situation, as the five clients involved had never been on a boat before. In addition, there were four instructors from the county who did not know any sign language or fingerspelling. Staff members and volunteers were paired up with clients on a one-to-one basis, sitting or standing next to an instructor and acting as interpreters while learning themselves. The group of clients involved ranged from those who were totally deaf-blind to those with

partial sight and hearing.



The Sailors: (l. to r.) Captain Ed, John Hsu, Merry Johnson, Carl Becker, Rosa Perea, Kim Johnson, Charlie Pope, Connie Bates, Larry Mattei and a second Captain Ed.

The first day was rather rough, just getting acquainted with the instructors, the boat, its equipment, and—most of all—the feeling of being on a boat in the water. There were four stations on the boat that needed to be manned at all times and a fifth person was always ready to alternate in these if necessary. This was set up in case anyone became tired or had a problem. The group rotated stations from the boom and mainsail in the bow of the boat to the helm in the stern

which steered it.

On the second day, everyone put on their life preservers and were anxious to go again. This time they learned all the different types of knots and how to use them, beside learning to sail. They also learned all the sailing terms used by sailors. The captain told everyone that on the last day of sailing there would be a quiz, and the clients were determined to be ready for it.

The wind really died down during the third day, so everyone practiced their knots and sailing terms. Since the sailing was poor on this day, the instructors decided to test the group on what they had learned, and everyone did well.

By Friday, the last day, all fears of the new adventure were gone, and all that the clients wanted to do was sail! By this time the instructors had picked up finger-spelling and some signs, and they felt great in being able to communicate. The clients manned their stations and proceeded to sail the boat all by themselves, doing all the work



with the instructors just giving directions and working with them hand over hand. The clients had worked so hard during the week, and this final accomplishment of doing all themselves was utterly fantastic to watch. It was sad that the week had to end; but for all of us who participated in this experience, it was a week we would never forget and would treasure for years to come.

As a result of this accomplishment, the Nassau County sailing program has invited us back in the summer of 1983 to sail the same boat, and even to learn to sail the small sloops and catamarans. We were proud when we were told that the group from the Helen Keller National Center was by far the best of the crews from the summer of 1982.

Recreation can be fun, but it can also be fun while you're learning.

## HKNC PUBLISHES CURRICULUM

The HKNC announces the publication of the "HKNC Curriculum Models for Evaluation

and Rehabilitation of Deaf-Blind Adults."

This project has evolved over many years and is the result of staff and client experiences within the National Center's program, and from existing models for the deaf, the blind and other disabled populations.

The models have been adapted to meet the needs of the deaf-blind and to serve as a tool to provide quality services to this population.

The bound volume contains curriculum models for seven departments:

AUDIOLOGY: If Audiology is of special interest, we suggest that you order "Audio-logical Evaluation & Aural Rehabilitation of the Deaf-Blind Adult" by Kramer, Sullivan & Hirsch @ \$7. Excerpts from this publication also appear within the complete bound volume and they provide guidelines for planning and implementing aural rehabilitation including "Auditory Training Sequence, Hearing Aid Orientation & Auditory localization."

COMMUNICATIONS LEARNING CENTER (CLC): Curriculum offers a diverse program of

instruction for a variety of skills and devices facilitating communication. Curricula programs currently available are: pre-language, language, handwriting, braille, sign language and manual sign alphabet, use of an interpreter, typing, aids and devices, basic and advanced mathematics, banking, and independent living. Programs are in a check-list format.

DAILY LIVING SKILLS (DLS): Focuses on the development of skills related to personal grooming, time and money management, wardrobe management, basic sewing, table manners and game concepts.

HEALTH & HYGIENE: The check-list format covers the following areas: Prosthetic hygiene, Foot Hygiene, Feminine Hygiene, First Aid, Administration of Medications, Home Nursing, Health Principles and Sex Education.

HOME MANAGEMENT: Outlines the basic evaluation and training objective for food preparation, cooking procedures and house-keeping skills, including the various aspects of general cleaning, laundering and ironing.



Reporting forms are also included.

INDUSTRIAL ARTS: Descriptions of simple and complex industrial assembly sequences designed to develop work transferable skills necessary for placement in sheltered and competitive employment. Rating forms are included to document the results of evaluation, training, and work behaviors.

ORIENTATION AND MOBILITY: Sequential outline of specific skills including: Orientation to Campus Buildings, Sighted Guide Techniques, Protective Techniques, Long Cane Techniques, Residential and Commercial Travel, Shopping Skills, Use of Public Transportation and Electronic Aids.

The price for all seven models is \$30.00 (plus \$1.09 for shipping & handling). Each unit is available for separate purchase. The price of each of the seven units is \$5.00 (plus 63¢ shipping and handling).

Orders must be pre-paid. Please make checks payable to the Helen Keller National Center and mail with your order to HKNC,

c/o Publications Department, 111 Middle Neck Road, Sands Point, NY 11050.

## EIGHTH ANNUAL NATIONAL CONVENTION OF THE AADB

The eighth annual national convention of the American Association of the Deaf-Blind is scheduled to take place July 10-17, 1983. Site of the convention will be the National Technical Institute for the Deaf, located on the campus of Rochester Institute of Technology, Rochester, New York. An exciting week of learning, recreational and social activities is planned.

Sunday, July 10, will be the day of arrival, with a social get-together that evening. Many activities and meetings are planned for the week, including tours, and a banquet and farewell party are set for the final Saturday evening. Sunday, July 17, is the day of departure.

The host committee is looking into the possibilities of full-day and half-day tours.

One of these may be a visit to famous Niagara Falls, where the Niagara River spills over a 180-foot cliff in a spectacular cascade.

Convention applications will soon be mailed out to all subscribers on THE VOICE mailing list. If you are not on the mailing list and want to be sure of receiving the application package, or if you know of someone who would like to receive it, send for information, in either print or braille, to: 1983 AADB Convention, P.O. Box 22778, Rochester, NY 14692.

As in the past, arrangements are being made to meet delegates at local bus and train stations and airports. This has always been a difficult part of convention planning because so many participants do not make their arrangements till the last minute, or forget to inform the host committee of their time of arrival. It is important that those planning to attend the convention make travel arrangements as early as possible, and make every effort to arrive at Rochester between ten A.M. and four P.M. on opening day.



For further information, please write to the address given above.

### WHAT'S NEW?

#### Thermostat for Blind Persons Introduced

Introduced in the Sears, Roebuck & Co. Fall 1982 General Catalog (on p. 1149) is a temperature control thermostat for blind and visually impaired persons. It may be used with heating and air conditioning or with heating only. It has a moveable arrow that the user lines up with a fixed, reference point arrow at 70 degrees Fahrenheit. When the moveable arrow is moved either up or down from this setting, it clicks for every two degrees it is moved. Operating instructions are included in large type and braille or a cassette tape with instructions is available for free. The catalog's price for #42 H 9182 is \$24.99.

(From Journal of Visual Impairment  
and Blindness)

## Technology Highlighted in Braille Newsletter

The latest issue of Braille Research Newsletter highlights many new technological advances. Microcomputers, tangible graphics, a map stereo copier, a braille-to-print translator, computer-controlled braille embossers, "touch color," and other innovations are covered. Issue No. 13 is available in braille from National Braille Press, 88 St. Stephen St., Boston, MA 02115, or in ink-print from Warwick Research Unit for the Blind, University of Warwick, Coventry CV4 7AL, England. Either costs \$6.

(From Journal of Visual Impairment  
and Blindness)

## Braille, Large Print Telegrams Available

Western Union has announced it now sends braille and large print telegrams throughout the continental United States.

## TO A NONAGENARIAN

Harvester of the years,  
see how this tree of life that you were  
given  
has borne rich fruits that once were only  
dreams.  
Now reap as you have sown,  
honor and love to fill the heart's deep  
hunger,  
with something of heaven and earth to make  
them sweet—  
for you must know that Time  
does not measure a soul by any season,  
but by the gathered glory of dreams fulfilled.

—Robert J. Smithdas

(From Shared Beauty © 1982)







# *NAT-CENT NEWS*



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## EDITORIAL

## BEAUTY

By Robert J. Smithdas, L.H.D., Litt.D.

In philosophy, beauty is a concept that can be argued on a highly abstract level. But for the ordinary human being, beautiful things are those that have a positive appeal to the individual's senses, and give pleasure whenever they are experienced or become part of awareness. Nor does beauty need to be formed from the concrete realities we perceive in the world around us. It can be as intangible as contemplation of a pleasurable idea, or the memory that rekindles the happiness of a past experience.

For those who have lost both sight and hearing, or those whose sight and hearing are severely limited, the concept of what is beautiful is dependent on sensitivity to shape, texture, symmetry, fragrance, and remembered past experiences. And there must be a harmony of these qualities that pleases

the individual, just as a certain arrangement of words in a poem appeals to a poet because they mirror a thought or mood and seem exactly right.

In this issue we are highlighting the recent dedication of a Sensory Garden at the Helen Keller National Center—a place in the sun where deaf-blind people can experience and enjoy a wide variety of sensations that are stimulating and creative. Even though many of them may not be able to see the bright colors or hear the splashing of a fountain, they will be able to appreciate its beauty in other ways.

Beauty is interpreted in different ways by different individuals, and sight and hearing are not always necessarily involved. And after all, no one has ever seen a song.



## A SENSORY GARDEN FOR THE DEAF-BLIND

Helen Keller, born more than 100 years ago this year, has left a rich legacy for the deaf-blind throughout the world. Not only did she serve as an inspirational role-model, but she spearheaded the organization of a program of comprehensive rehabilitation training which grows stronger each year.

On June 29, at 2:00 p.m., the Helen Keller National Center welcomed a new addition—the Helen Keller Fragrance Garden, a sensory garden of fragrances and textures, designed specifically for those who have been deprived of sight and hearing.

Conceived in 1980 and developed over a three-year period by the Sands Point Garden Club, with funds it raised exclusively for this project, the sensory garden is particularly appropriate since flowers held a special meaning for Keller. She and other pioneers advocated national legislation to establish a center for deaf-blind persons, and this garden will serve as an adjunct to the

Helen Keller National Center program.

The garden, which is open to the public, has a dual purpose: to serve as a source of pleasure, recreation and hobby, and to provide vocational training in nursery, greenhouse and commercial use of plants for the Center's deaf-blind clients.

The garden extends the existing horticulture program conducted in the Center's adjoining greenhouse. Deaf-blind clients learn how to grow vegetables and plants from seed and seedlings; how to fertilize; how to spray to prevent plant diseases; as well as the skills of bookkeeping and the techniques of marketing their products.

Herbert Cohen, landscape architect and chairman of the department of horticulture at Farmingdale State University, was commissioned by the Sands Point Garden Club to design the garden. He worked closely with professional staff members at the Center to provide ease of orientation and mobility for the vision and hearing impaired clients as they move through the garden and work at the various



planters.

Planting beds line the walkways and patios. Steel posts connected by smooth plastic chains lead visitors along the edge of the plantings and allow them to find the labels, in both raised printing and braille, that identify the plants, which may be touched.



It's planting time! Members of the Sands Point Garden Club work with dedication and enthusiasm to complete the Helen Keller Fragrance Garden.



Raised planters are also planted with a variety of fragrant or textured plants, making this one of the few sensory gardens planted on more than one level. So that people may wash the confusing mixture of accumulated fragrances from their hands before trying others, a large redwood fountain is situated in the middle of the garden.

Among the fragrant plants in the garden, are Korean spice viburnum, sweet shrub, rose, juniper, clove pink, lavender, bee balm, santolina, yarrow, sweet alyssum, sage, rosemary, marigold and chive. On a warm day, people sitting on the benches can smell the spicy fragrance of the clove pink or the pungent odor of the juniper.

A variety of textures that may be easily sensed by touch is provided by soft, wooly lamb's ears, prickly juniper, waxy boxwood, Japanese holly and soft-textured yews.

The Sands Point Garden Club selected Goldberg and Rodler of Huntington, N.Y., an award-winning landscape nursery since 1958, to construct and plant the garden.

Gordon Jones, director of Planting Fields Arboretum in Oyster Bay, served as horticulture consultant. The redwood planters, benches and fountain were custom built.

The guest speaker and master of ceremonies at the 2:00 p.m. dedication was Ralph Snodsmith, well known host of "Garden Hot Line" on WOR-radio. Congressman Robert Mrazek presented a citation to commemorate the project, and Sands Point Mayor Edward Madison joined Martin Adler, director of the Center, in presenting a tribute to the Garden Club members.

Fragrance Garden Committee chairwoman Mrs. Nicholas Bachko commented, "All of the Sands Point Garden Club members have found this a rewarding project. The process—from developing funds and blueprints, to researching sensory plants, and then working and planting together in the completed garden—has been an enriching experience. In three years our dream became a reality."

The public was invited to the dedication and to explore the garden and tour the training facility.





Martin Adler, Director of HKNC, addresses the audience at the dedication ceremony. Members of the Sands Point Garden Club, as honored guests, sat in the patio area.

Helene Herzig, reporter for the NORTH SHORE magazine, visited the garden in spring, and wrote a personal account of her visit. Some of her observations follow.

"At first glance, the area bordering the HKNC Vocational building looked like a landscape in front of a city skyscraper—paved areas, round and oblong redwood planters—all carefully designed. Then you wondered why the planters were so high, why the chain was so thick, why the paving changed from brick



to concrete to tanbark.

"Barbara Hausman, Assistant Director of Community Education, explained. 'The planters must be high enough for our clients, the deaf-blind, to work comfortably in what will be their garden. The chain is a guide-rail to lead the visually deprived along the paths of the area marked by braille identifiers. The differing ground surfaces are tactile clues to the separate areas of the garden.'

"In the center is a fountain. Water has special significance here because Helen Keller's first word as she broke through the language barrier was 'water.' ...

"Gardening diligently was Mrs. Theodore Klumpp, Horticulture Chairman in charge of selecting, buying, and setting in the plants. 'I put in one hundred daffodils and one hundred hyacinths,' she offered, illustrating the physical work involved. She also spoke of the importance of choice, pointing out some bushes espaliered on a trellis. 'We have three varieties of viburnum because they are so fragrant, and bloom all season.' ...

"On our walk around the garden we saw budded viburnum bushes ready to break into flower; at their feet small bush herbs. Then came the rose bushes, so important because they were Helen Keller's favorite flower. Our guide continued, 'And here day lilies, there Chinese juniper, and there, fragrant little blossoms called narcissus.' The walk ended in a small square bounded by tall thornless locust trees designed, when in leaf,



In foreground: Merline Chambers, Client; Madeline Cohen, Horticulture Instructor; and Susan Barlow, Client. Helen Bachko, Chairman of the Sands Point Sensory Garden Committee, is kneeling in rear. Other club members work in the planter.

(Photographs by John F. Meehan)



to form a canopy over a cool summer resting place. Next was a picnic area, and beyond that, a vegetable patch.

"As we walked, the purpose of the garden became clear. It is a chance for those shut out from the wonders of sight and sound:

(1) to feel, smell and enjoy nature in another way, (2) to walk in the fresh air with a purpose, aware of surroundings, (3) to learn the skills for possible future employment in a greenhouse and garden.

"The Sensory Garden complements the HKNC Horticultural Program conducted in an adjoining greenhouse where clients learn the concepts of growing plants from seed, and the skills needed to market their products. We were taken there by Madeline Cohen, director of the program, who works with about twelve clients. One of them, Margaret, greeted us with animation in her face, and I marveled that she knew we were there. Margaret, we were told, had worked briefly in a flower shop when she still had some residual vision. Now she was learning horticulture with the



aid of special tools, such as a plastic seed tray with openings to guide seed into a straight row. A young woman, Merline, who wore thick glasses, was watering vegetable seedlings, bending low over them and feeling the soil with her fingers. Nearby were sprouting potted bulbs donated by former high school teacher, Jim MacIntosh of the Garden Club. All would be transplanted outside.

"Horticulture is only part of the all-encompassing program offered by HKNC to deaf-blind residents from all over the country.... The Sensory Garden, however, goes beyond the areas of the training program. It provides the same kind of aesthetic experience that inspired Helen Keller to contribute so much to the sensibilities of mankind. Her words speak to everyone: 'But the roses were loveliest of all... filling the whole air with their fragrance... And in the early morning dew, they felt so soft, so pure, I could not help wondering if they did not resemble the asphodels of God's garden.'"

## THE HKNC JOB BANK

By Melissa Raue

Placement Specialist

An idea that has been around the Helen Keller National Center for some time is that of having a job bank. This would be an information source of jobs that deaf-blind people do and also a list of employers of deaf-blind workers. This could be helpful to many different groups of people.

On the simplest level, it would make it possible to give a quick answer to questions about deaf-blind workers like: "Are there any deaf-blind secretaries?" (Not that I know of.) "What kind of professional jobs can a deaf-blind person do?" (We know of a psychologist, teachers, etc.); or even, "How many people born deaf-blind and working in industry are there in Louisiana?" We would have this type of information on a computer that would search very quickly through all its files and pull out the ones that fit into all these categories.

The job bank could also help deaf-blind people who are looking for a job or trying to decide what kind of work they would like to do. We could tell them if people who have similar hearing and visual losses have done a particular job, and in what kind of company or workshop.

The best thing that could happen would be if this job bank were "living"—growing and changing. This would be the case if people used it, added to it, and changed information as necessary. This is what we hope for.

Helen Keller National Center cannot do this alone; we need everyone who is able to help us gather the information.

Will you help? A questionnaire asking for some information follows this article. We at Helen Keller ask you to answer the questions and send it back to us. If for some reason you do not want to answer a particular question, but would like to help, answer the others and write "not available" or make an "X" in the one you do not want to answer. This will show us that you saw the



question but are not answering. Otherwise we might think you forgot it or missed it.

If you have ever worked as a deaf-blind person, please fill out the questionnaire. If you do not wish to remove the pages from your copy of NAT-CENT NEWS, you may answer by number on a separate sheet of paper. If you know of deaf-blind workers who do not get NAT-CENT NEWS, share the questionnaire with them and ask them to answer it.

A lot of good things can happen if everyone who can, helps us. I would be happy to share the information we find (only the parts which are not private, of course).

Please send completed questionnaires to:

Melissa Raue  
Placement Specialist  
Helen Keller National Center  
111 Middle Neck Road  
Sands Point, New York 11050

JOB BANK QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Your name \_\_\_\_\_
2. Your address \_\_\_\_\_
3. Have you worked? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
4. Where? \_\_\_\_\_  
(name of workplace)

\_\_\_\_\_ (address of workplace)

5. What is your job? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Do you still work there? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
7. How long? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Have you had other jobs? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
9. What were they? \_\_\_\_\_

10. Which of these best describes your vision?

\_\_\_\_\_ Totally blind

\_\_\_\_\_ Light perception only

\_\_\_\_\_ Can see more than light but not  
enough to read large print

\_\_\_\_\_ Can read large print

\_\_\_\_\_ Can read regular print

11. Do you have a problem with peripheral  
(side) vision? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_
12. How do you receive communication (check  
as many as apply):
- \_\_\_\_ see signs/fingerspelling
  - \_\_\_\_ see lip movements
  - \_\_\_\_ read print
  - \_\_\_\_ feel signs/fingerspelling
  - \_\_\_\_ use Tellatouch
  - \_\_\_\_ hearing
  - \_\_\_\_ other
13. How did you lose your vision:
- \_\_\_\_ born with problem
  - \_\_\_\_ gradually lost vision as child
  - \_\_\_\_ suddenly lost vision as child
  - \_\_\_\_ gradually lost vision as adult
  - \_\_\_\_ suddenly lost vision as adult
14. How do you express communication (check  
all that apply):
- \_\_\_\_ sign
  - \_\_\_\_ fingerspell
  - \_\_\_\_ speak
  - \_\_\_\_ write
  - \_\_\_\_ other



15. What is your highest level of education:

- \_\_\_\_\_ less than 6th grade
- \_\_\_\_\_ less than 12th grade
- \_\_\_\_\_ high school graduate
- \_\_\_\_\_ some college
- \_\_\_\_\_ college graduate
- \_\_\_\_\_ some graduate school
- \_\_\_\_\_ have advanced degree

16. What other training do you have?

How long?

- \_\_\_\_\_ Vocational technical school
- \_\_\_\_\_ Rehabilitation program
- \_\_\_\_\_ On-the-job training
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other

17. Do you live alone? \_\_\_\_\_

with husband or wife \_\_\_\_\_

with other family members \_\_\_\_\_

with friends \_\_\_\_\_

in group home or special residence \_\_\_\_\_

18. Can we contact you to ask more?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

19. What is your telephone/TTD number?

\_\_\_\_\_

## REFLECTED GLORY



Mr. Louis J. Bettica makes some comments upon being presented the Peter J. Salmon award during the recent AADB Convention.

(Photo by Steve Barrett)

In June, the American Association of the Deaf-Blind (AADB) announced the selection of Louis J. Bettica as the first recipient of the Peter J. Salmon Memorial Award in recognition of his many years of dedicated service to deaf-blind people.

This prestigious award was presented

on Saturday, July 16, during the AADB's eighth annual convention at the National Technical Institute for the Deaf, Rochester, New York.

Mr. Bettica began his distinguished career in the field of deaf-blindness as director of The Industrial Home for the Blind's

Department of Services for the Deaf-Blind in Brooklyn, New York, and as director of the IHB Low Vision Rehabilitation Service, the first of its kind in the United States, which has since become a model for other agencies.

As coordinator of the IHB Anne Sullivan Macy Service during the mid-1960's, he was instrumental in developing services for deaf-blind persons in state and local programs throughout New England, the Mid-Atlantic, and East-Central states.

From 1969 to 1980, Mr. Bettica served as director of services, assistant director, and associate director, respectively, at the Helen Keller National Center.

Though his official retirement began in 1980, Mr. Bettica continues to be involved at the Center as a professional training consultant, as a lecturer for graduate students and professional groups on services to the deaf-blind, and as a writer for various rehabilitation and professional periodicals.

Mr. Bettica is a member of numerous professional organizations, including the



American Deafness and Rehabilitation Association, Academy of Social Work, and the American Association of Workers for the Blind. He received the Anne Sullivan Macy Citation from the AAWB in 1966, and the Anne Sullivan Award in 1980 for 39 years of devoted service to the deaf-blind and blind, presented by the IHB and Perkins School for the Blind. He holds a Master's degree from Adelphi University and is a member of the Academy of Certified Social Workers.

On being informed that he would be the first recipient of the award, Mr. Bettica said: "I am deeply touched by this designation because it comes from the deaf-blind people themselves, and I feel particularly honored because this award bears the name of Peter J. Salmon, one of the pioneers in work for the blind and deaf-blind, whom I have always respected and admired."

As a final climax, during the banquet Mr. Bettica was unanimously voted in as an honorary life member of the AADB.

## FIELD NOTES

By Dean Wyrick, M.S., G.R.C.

National Field Services Coordinator

In spite of temperatures that soared above 100 degrees daily, the American Association for the Blind convened in Phoenix, Arizona, for its 1983 international conference, July 10-14. This year's conference theme was "Foresight Is Insight," and all activities and presentations evolved around it. More than 700 members from the United States, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, Bahrain, and other countries attended what may be the final conference of the AAWB in its current form. AAWB is joining with the Association for Education of the Visually Handicapped (AEVH) to form an alliance which is expected to be a larger, stronger, more effective organization.

Of special importance to those who are interested in deaf-blind persons, the Phoenix conference included several activities dealing with deaf-blindness. Mr. Charles Freeman,

Chief, U.S. Rehabilitation Services Administration, gave a presentation on the RSA's National Objective on Deaf-Blindness. Mr. Kevin J. Lessard of Perkins School for the Blind spoke on "Developing Community Housing Services for Blind and Deaf-Blind Students" who have completed the Perkins training program. Mr. Dean Ericson, the Helen Keller National Center's southeastern regional representative, and Ms. Leslie Neese, a specialist in services for the deaf-blind, discussed community-based work and independent living programs. Harry C. Anderson, director of rehabilitation services at the Conklin Center in Florida, led a discussion "Communications and Assistance of Deaf-Blind Passengers by Airlines Personnel."

The AAWB's Section on Deaf-Blindness held its elections and voted in its 1983-1984 slate of officers. Harry Anderson takes on the responsibilities of chairman for another term, and Dean Ericson was re-elected as secretary-treasurer. Mr. Robert Heller of the New Jersey Commission for the Blind was



selected as chairman-elect.

Next year's conference is scheduled to be held in June at Nashville, Tennessee, and will be the first AAWB-AEVH Alliance International meeting. If you wish to become involved in work for the deaf-blind in this organization, contact Mr. Harry C. Anderson, Chairman, Conklin Center, 405 White Street, Daytona Beach, Florida 32014. Telephone: (904) 258-3441.

#### IN MEMORIAM: JOHN J. MURPHEY

It is with deep sorrow that we record the passing of John J. Murphey on July 17, 1983.

Jack, as he was affectionately known to a host of friends, was editor of GOOD CHEER magazine for the deaf-blind for eighteen years before he relinquished his editorial duties three years ago, due to failing health. A man of quick wit and great personal warmth, he was admired by the readers of the magazine, with many of whom he often corresponded through personal letters.



In this 1979 photo, Jack Murphey is shown receiving an award from Hadley School for the Blind. Geraldine Lawhorn (l.) is presenting the award. Jack's wife, Alma, is at right in photo.

A native of Missouri, Jack attended the Missouri School for the Blind in St. Louis. After graduation, he enrolled at the University of St. Louis, where he planned to major in music. While in college, his hearing began to deteriorate and he changed his course of study, eventually graduating with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Philosophy. Shortly afterward he became totally deaf.

Despite the severe problems of deaf-blindness, Jack established his own business of reseating and repairing chairs, which he operated out of his home. Eventually he married his wife, Alma, and together they raised

a family of five children, in whom he took great pride. In addition to family duties, Jack and Alma became members of the Missouri Federation of the Blind, and for many years were actively involved in legislation to improve conditions for the blind in Missouri.

Jack was recipient of the Outstanding Achievement Award of the Hadley School for the Blind, and the Anne Sullivan Award, presented by Perkins School for the Blind and The Industrial Home for the Blind.

This past July, at its banquet in Rochester, New York, the American Association of the Deaf-Blind awarded him its first Laura D. Bridgman Memorial Award, given to a deaf-blind person for outstanding achievement. Though he was unable to make the trip to Rochester to receive the award personally, Jack had been informed that he would be the recipient, and he was deeply moved. In addition, he was made an honorary life member of the AADB by a unanimous vote of the membership during the banquet.

Jack served in various capacities with



the Missouri Federation of the Blind, and also served on the Advisory Committee of the Helen Keller National Center.

John J. Murphey led a full and productive life, and was loved, admired, and respected by many.

### A POET'S SPECIAL VISION

By Merle English

and Dennis Hevesi

(From a story in NEWSDAY, Long Island publication, May 7, 1983)

His words are shimmering ripples from the deepest pools of his memory, or reflections of the world known only through his taste buds, his nostrils or that mind's eye at the tip of each finger.

And last week, as befits an institution that, in its leader's words, seeks to prove that those with handicaps are "full, rich human beings," the Human Resources Center here honored Robert Smithdas as its first Nassau County Disabled Artist of the Year.

Smithdas, 58, of Port Washington, is blind and deaf.

He is also the first deaf and blind person ever to have won a master's degree from a university in the United States—awarded by New York University in 1953. He is editor of Nat-Cent News, a magazine printed in Braille and large-type that is circulated in many parts of the world. He is director of community education at the Helen Keller National Center for Deaf-Blind Youths and Adults in Sands Point.

And he is a poet.

Citing Smithdas for his "creative contributions to world culture," Edwin Martin, president of the Human Resources Center, said during the second annual Very Special Arts Festival at the center that the honoree was chosen because, "We felt he would be an inspiration to other disabled artists. We want to demonstrate that disabled people are not just flat, two-dimensional people. They are full, rich human beings capable of art and joy and of being productive members of

society."



Dr. Robert J. Smithdas (l.) receives the first "Nassau County Disabled Artist of the Year" award from Dr. Edwin W. Martin, President of Human Resources Center.

Although unable to hear his own voice, Smithdas has learned to speak and gives poetry readings. People communicate with him through Braille or finger spelling. He has published his autobiography, "Life at My Fingertips." His second book of poetry, "Shared Beauty," was published in January of 1983.

And, in 1961, five years after publica-

tion of his first volume of poems, "City of the Heart," he was named poet of the year by the Poetry Society of America.

Smithdas lost his sight and hearing after he contracted cerebro-spinal meningitis at the age of 4. Much of his writing reflects



what he has experienced through his remaining senses of touch, taste and smell. He writes of the "cool scents of lilac," and a poem from "Shared Beauty" says in part:

"I only know that when I touch a flower,  
or feel the sun and wind upon my face,  
or hold your hand in mine, there is a  
brightness  
within my soul that words can never  
trace.  
I call it Life, and laugh with its de-  
light,  
though life itself be out of sound  
and sight."

Many of his poems are about love, inspired by his devotion to his wife, Michelle, who is also deaf and blind. He also writes to release anger and frustration. "Deaf-blind people are isolated from the usual happenings of the world," he says. "Part of my feeling is frustration, but the rest is appreciation for what does come through, qualities like friendship."

And many of his images, Smithdas says, are drawn from "precious" memories of those first four years, when, as he writes in "City of the Heart:"

"My eyes were filled with light  
and the glory of the sun and stars  
and moon,  
and all the world of radiant colors ..."

#### HKNC HONORED VOLUNTEERS

The Helen Keller National Center celebrated its Fifth Annual Volunteer Recognition Night on Thursday, June 23rd at 8:00 P.M. in the Peter J. Salmon Residence building at the Center's headquarters in Sands Point.

Since Helen Keller was born on June 27, 1880, Volunteer Recognition Night focused on the birthday celebration of this courageous and accomplished world figure, who along with other distinguished leaders in the field of deaf-blindness, was responsible for the establishment of this unique national center.

Some 100 active volunteers who had earned

awards were recognized for their dedicated work with the deaf-blind clients through the past year. According to the number of hours served, each volunteer received an originally designed gold-tone pin or charm with raised letters and a braille cell reading "HKNC," a key-chain made by clients in the Industrial Arts department, or an inscribed certificate.

Ranging from high school seniors to college students and senior citizens, these committed community members represented men and women from varying professions and backgrounds who live in Port Washington or other parts of Nassau or Suffolk and even Queens and Brooklyn.

Volunteer Allison Burrows (seated, r.) talks with client Nancy Hollis. HKNC volunteers Collie McLaughlin, Stella Hoff, Jim McIntosh, Ed Fitzgerald and Volunteer Coordinator Nancy Lagan are in background.





After attending training and orientation sessions, volunteers work directly with clients in the rehabilitation program areas such as the Communications Learning Center, Daily Living Skills, Arts and Crafts, Industrial Arts, and Recreation and Horticulture programs. Recreation and Residence staff would be unable to implement the leisure hour programs (evenings and weekends) such as bowling, sailing, museum trips or even rafting down the Delaware River without the additional assistance of volunteers.

Others spend many tedious hours brailleing and typing large print copies of curriculum materials, newsletters, menus, instructor guides, etc. for clients and staff members.

Guest speakers for the evening were Congressman Robert J. Mrazek, 3rd CD, and supervisor of the Town of North Hempstead, John B. Kiernan. Edwin J. Vetog, President, IHB Board of Trustees, welcomed the guests and Dr. Robert J. Smithdas offered greetings. Martin A. Adler, Director, HKNC, served as Master of Ceremonies and Nancy Lagan,

Coordinator of Volunteer Services, presented the awards.



Some HKNC clients and staff members combined their talents to form the Singing/Signing Choir. Standing, (l. to r.) are: Diane Goldberg, Kevin Anderson, Merline Chambers, Margaret Reis, Doug Karn, Connie Bates, Melissa Shapiro, Patsy Walters, Linda Anderson, Michael Voytash and Barbara Levittan. In front row are: Linda Fenske, Maureen McGowan, Kathy Vida and Nancy O'Donnell.

This year, for the first time, an HKNC client, Margaret Reis, and a former client who is presently teaching at the Center, Mike Van Orman, expressed their personal views re meaningful volunteer involvement. Entertainment presented by the HKNC Singing/Signing Choir featured the theme of "Celebration" and highlighted the multi-volunteer activities during the year. Corsages donated by a local florist, "Falconer," were presented to all Volunteers by the clients and refreshments, including cookies baked by clients in the

Home Management Department, were served at the conclusion of the program.

## A HEART-WARMING LIAISON

By Barbara Hausman

Assistant Director of Community Education

How often have you read a story featuring Senior Citizens needing and receiving assistance from others? Here is a unique and inspiring account of the Greater Manhasset-New York Area Chapter—unit 1234—of the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP)—which reached out with genuine care and concern to one of the most severely disabled and isolated populations—the Deaf-Blind.

As part of their 10th Anniversary Celebration, the Chapter undertook, at the suggestion of Myrla Roseberry and under the able chairmanship of Carl Peehl (87 years young) and his 21-member committee, a fund-raising campaign for the Helen Keller National Center's Scholarship Program. 80% of the 500 members contributed to the year-long effort.



"Our goal was to create a project where people would become involved with each other through working, serving, playing and socializing," Peehl commented. Members were creative and imaginative and earned their contributions by participating in a walk-a-thon, emptying the contents of a Piggy Bank, selling hand-crocheted Teddy Bears and hand-made Christmas stockings, baking and selling loaves of bread, piano playing at parties, hosting a Glogg party, showing slides of China, sail-boat racing, etc. Others engaged in "Honest Labor" through activities like washing windows, kitchen service, raking leaves, running errands for a shut-in widow, and operating a taxi-service. A luncheon to honor National AARP President, Robert Bouton, and the presidents of 31 Long Island area chapters was another source of revenue.

The decision to launch this campaign was motivated by a visit to the HKNC headquarters in Sands Point, New York—the single national facility which provides comprehensive pre-vocational training to deaf-blind youths and

adults, as well as services to deaf-blind persons across the nation. The members felt reinforced by a meeting with Dr. Robert J. Smithdas, Director of Community Education, a prominent advocate for the deaf-blind population. HKNC's goals were compatible and meaningful to the AARP members: "To enable deaf-blind persons to become educated, employable, self-sufficient and as independent as possible, and to feel a sense of personal dignity and self-respect."



Members of the Greater Manhasset-New York Area Chapter of AARP - Carl Peehl & Hildagarde & Richard Stoeltzing (standing, l. to r.) observe a braille lesson in progress. Client Margaret Reis (seated, l.) receives instruction from Michelle Smithdas, assistant instructor in the Communications Learning Center.

Though the club raised a total of \$3500, in reality this represents a sum of \$56,000, because each \$1 of donation generates \$16 of training services at the

Center " explained Jules Côté, Associate Director, HKNC, when he received the final

check at the Club's May 25th luncheon. "When a deaf-blind person is referred to HKNC from his/her individual state, due to federal budget cuts that state may not have sufficient rehabilitation monies to cover their share of training costs. Thus the Scholarship Fund can fill the gap and afford deaf-blind persons the opportunity to build productive lives," amplified Coté. To continue the link between Donors and Recipients, the Club will receive anonymous profiles of the deaf-blind clients who will benefit directly from Unit 1234's selfless endeavors. Periodic reports as their recipients progress in acquiring new skills in communication, mobility, daily living, home management, job preparation, etc., will also be available from our nearby Center.

"Our Chapter has good reason to rejoice. The 10th Anniversary Year's activities brought us closer together and through them we lived our AARP motto: 'To serve and not be served,'" wrote Peehl in his concluding report to the members.



## SHE CONQUERED TWO HANDICAPS

One of the most memorable handshakes of Geraldine Lawhorn's life was the one that made her one of the growing number of deaf and blind persons in the nation who have received college diplomas.

Helen Keller was the first to receive a college degree.

Lawhorn, 67, received the sheepskin at her graduation from Northeastern Illinois University on June 12.

"Going back to school was an opportunity to refresh my mind" she said. "Organizations and people who work with the deaf-blind may respect my ability more now that I have a degree."

Lawhorn, who speaks clearly and concisely, lost her sight by age 12 and hearing by 19. Her parents (her father was a vaudeville show manager) decided theatrics would be good therapy for her.

She embarked on a career as a one-woman show that included a Carnegie Hall perfor-

mance. She wrote her own monologues, which she still performs.

Her penchant for writing and working with deaf-blind people led to a job in 1967 at the Hadley School for the Blind, Winnetka, Illinois. She is chairman of the deaf-blind department and teaches courses in independent living and verse writing.

She continued teaching while studying in Northeastern's Without Walls Program. Her sign-language interpreter translated all her study materials into braille for her.

The headaches she had as a student were similar to any other scholar's—reading the assignments and meeting deadlines.

"I have the same goals, the same mental feelings, as anyone else," she said. "I'm just deprived of certain physical senses. We all have the same goals, but we all have to go on different roads!"

## A SEMINAR FOR PARENTS

In May, ten parents and two professional workers from the midwestern states participated in a week-long, in-depth program at the Helen Keller National Center.

The seminar was intended to provide help for parents and families of deaf-blind children. It also acquainted them with the comprehensive, prevocational rehabilitation training program at the Center, and the services of its regional offices throughout the United States. It also served as an opportunity for parents and professional workers to know each other and to serve as a support group.

Participants were given opportunity to explore new methods and acquire skills in the areas of communication, basic education, speech and hearing evaluation and training, low vision aids and devices, orientation and mobility, leisure time activities, daily living skills, home management, work skills evaluation and training.



They also observed the Center's unique horticultural program for clients on its campus. They learned of technical advances in aids and devices which can provide deaf-blind people with greater independence.

Sessions were held among parents and Center staff social workers and counselors to discuss the unique problems faced by a family with a dual-handicapped child, and the emotional needs of the parents.

Evening activities included a potluck dinner with the Center's staff, shopping sprees and visits to interesting sites in neighboring New York City.

SPECIAL NOTICE TO READERS:  
NATIONAL DEAF-BLIND AWARENESS WEEK

Congressman Benjamin Gilman (R. New York), and Congressman Robert Mrazek (D. New York), have jointly introduced House Joint Resolution 309 (H.J. Res. 309) that will provide for the designation of the last week in June 1984 as "Helen Keller Deaf-Blind Awareness

Week."

To emphasize the importance of this legislation for all deaf-blind Americans, we quote the following excerpt from the congressmen's letter to their colleagues in the House of Representatives:

"This resolution would be an extremely important step forward to a segment in our society that has been largely ignored in the past. For deaf-blind Americans, a national awareness week would promote the recognition of their unique and special needs by stimulating interest in one of the severest handicaps known to mankind. Increased understanding will give rise to public and private concern for the well-being of the deaf-blind and encourage many essential services to the deaf-blind among the individual states.

"A national deaf-blind awareness week would bring the plight of the deaf-blind to the attention of the Nation, encouraging conscious and concentrated efforts to provide training, jobs, and support services to the deaf-blind population. The past stigma of

deaf-blindness, including neglect and denied opportunity, can become a future of hope for a courageous segment of the country. Let us not forget their inner strength, remembering always that the aid we extend to them in this resolution will be manifested in future dividends for this Nation."

This is a one-time resolution for 1984 only. Depending upon the support this Resolution generates, it may or may not be possible to develop similar resolutions which would be of great benefit to deaf-blind Americans in ensuing years. In order for the Resolution to pass Congress, 218 Congressmen must sponsor the Resolution.

Therefore, we are urging all readers of Nat-Cent News to contact their congressmen to ask them to give full support to this Resolution. We also urge families and friends of deaf-blind persons, and public and private agencies interested in the welfare of deaf-blind citizens, to write to Congress in support of H.J. Res. 309. If this legislation becomes a reality, it could be a landmark



beginning in providing adequate and necessary services for deaf-blind citizens throughout the country.

### JOB BULLETIN - BRAILLE PROOFREADERS

Informations Braille Service in Stuart, Florida is undergoing expansion. They have an urgent and ongoing need for braille proofreaders. The ideal candidate would have certification from the Library of Congress. A trainee without certification would also be acceptable if he or she is a fluent braille reader (130-150 words/minute) and has the English language skills to proofread effectively. Words per minute requirement can be relaxed if unusual skills in another area (excellent education, knowledge of a professional field and its lingo, etc.)

For specific information regarding salary and job details call Melissa Raue, Placement Specialist, Helen Keller National Center, (516) 944-8900 voice or TTY.

## 1984 INTERNATIONAL GAMES FOR THE DISABLED

The 1984 International Games for the Disabled is an Olympic type competition featuring top amputee, blind (and deaf-blind if qualified), cerebral palsied and Les Autres (the others) athletes in the world. This is the third time these games have been held, but the first time in the United States, and they will occur every four years.

Nassau County, Long Island, in New York State, will host the games and provide various sites for the events from June 16 through June 30, 1984.

Athletes will be selected to represent their country based on their qualifying in their homeland's National Championships. Some 1500 athletes from 40-50 countries are expected to participate.

Blind and deaf-blind athletes will compete in one of three classifications based upon their degree of visual impairment. Sports will include track and field, swimming, wrestling (men), and gymnastics (women)

with goal ball being the team sport.

If a deaf-blind athlete is interested in participating he/she must be a member of the USABA (the US Association for Blind Athletes and can receive details about membership and procedures for qualifying for the Games by writing to:

Arthur E. Copeland, President  
USABA  
55 West California Ave.  
Beach Haven, NJ 08008  
(609) 492-1017

#### REQUEST TO OUR READERS

Once again, it is time to revise the mailing list for NAT-CENT NEWS.

We hope that you will want to continue your free subscription to our newsletter. If so, you need only send us a card or note with the word "Yes" and your name, address and zip code just as it appears on your mailing label.

If there are any changes to be made in your name or address, please indicate these



after you have given us the above information.

If we do not receive a response, we will assume that you do not wish to continue your subscription.

Please let us know by November 1, 1983.

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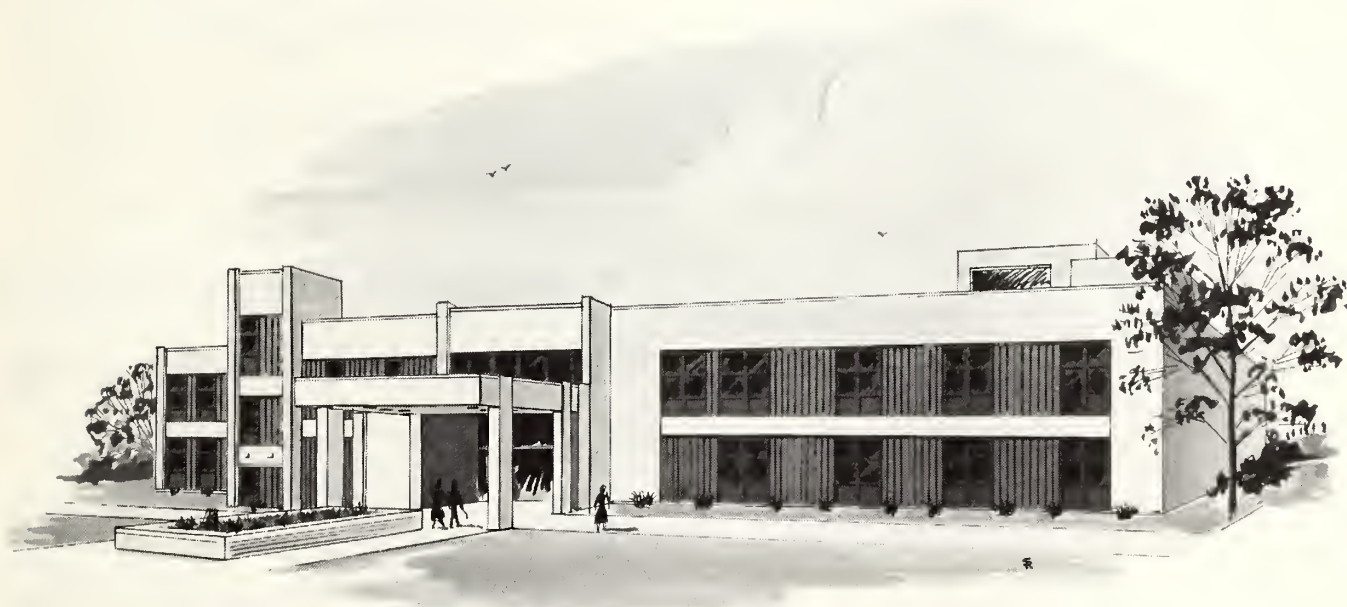
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EDITORIAL  
THIRD INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE  
ON DEAF-BLINDNESS

By Robert J. Smithdas, L.H.D., Litt.D.

The Third International Conference on Deaf-Blindness, held in Manama City, capital of Bahrain, one of the independent United Arab Emirates of the Mid-East, was undoubtedly the best organized and most informative meeting thus far on services to the deaf-blind population of the world. Attended by delegates from twenty-eight nations, and a large group of interested observers, the conference extended over a period of four days, November 5-8. The theme of the conference dealt with how new developments in modern science and technology can be applied to the lives of deaf-blind people to provide a greater measure of self-sufficiency and independence.

The conference opened with an impressive ceremony during which participants were officially greeted by the ruler of Bahrain,



His Highness Sheikh Isa Bin Salman Al-Khalifa, and Sheikh Abdullah M. Al Ghanim, president of the Regional Bureau of the Mid-East Committee for the Welfare of the Blind, and vice-president of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind. Highlight of the ceremony was the keynote speaker, His Royal Highness Prince Talal Bin Abdul-Aziz, UNICEF special envoy and president of AGFUND. Other



In the above photo, His Royal Highness Prince Talal Bin Abdul-Aziz delivers the keynote address before the assembly of the Third International Conference on Deaf-Blindness.

dignitaries who addressed the conference were Mrs. Dorina de Gouvea Nowill, president of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind, and Dr. Franz Sontaag, president of the International Federation of the Blind. The grand ballroom was decked with banks of flowers, and music was provided by students from

Al-Noor Institute for the Blind, all dressed in colorful native garb.

Each day of the conference was divided into morning and afternoon sessions, with three speakers presenting papers at each session. Each session was devoted to a specific aspect of deaf-blindness, with each speaker discussing a related topic, emphasizing how science and technology have—or eventually may—contribute solutions to the problems deaf-blind people face. Among the subjects discussed were: guide dogs, new developments in braille reading and writing, telecommunications, warning devices, progress in visual and auditory aids, and the roles of organizations assisting deaf-blind populations. Discussion after each presentation was animated and informative and shed new light on the problems of deaf-blind people in many countries, particularly in developing nations.

One comment kept recurring throughout the conference: devices and aids that can help a deaf-blind individual to greater independence usually are too expensive for the deaf-blind.



Seated on the dais are (left to right) Dr. Franz Sonntag, President of the International Federation of the Blind; Ms. Cheryl Craig, Interpreter; Mrs. Michelle J. Smithdas; Dr. Robert J. Smithdas, Chairman of the Conference; and Ms. Jane Rudomin, Interpreter.

There was also discussion as to whether a universal symbol should be adopted that will identify individuals as deaf-blind, in a similar manner as the white cane has become a symbol of blindness. However, no conclusive decision was reached on this topic during the conference.

Despite efforts to invite exhibitors to the conference, relatively few devices were shown. Finland now has a unique telephone device, but this was not demonstrated. The American TeleBraille telephone device was on display and attracted a great deal of interest because of its potential to be used both





At left is Mrs. Dorina de Gouvea Nowill, President of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind, as she converses with Mrs. Michelle Smithdas.

as a telecommuni-  
cation aid and a  
face-to-face de-  
vice. Sweden  
showed a small,  
battery-powered  
alarm clock with  
a vibrator, which  
could be ideal  
for deaf-blind  
travellers; and  
West Germany

displayed a special device into which three kinds of thermometers—indoor/outdoor, body temperature, and cooking thermometers—could be attached and read, using a braille-marked dial. However, it was unfortunate that not more exhibits were available.

The Third International Conference on Deaf-Blindness was outstanding for its spontaneous exchange of ideas and information, and for the obvious eagerness of the participants to share their knowledge with each other. A sincere vote of thanks must also go to

Mr. Anders Arnör, Honorary Secretary-General of the WCWB, and to Sheikh Abdullah Al-Ghanim and the Regional Bureau of the Mid-East Committee for the Welfare of the Blind, for preparing an outstanding program. Our hosts for the conference in Bahrain were the best—they were universally hospitable, kind and caring!

## COMMUNITY AND NEIGHBORHOOD EXPERIENCES AT HKNC

By Mary Michaud

Instructor, Mobility Department

It's approximately 11:00 o'clock on a Thursday morning in Port Washington. One young woman has just finished cashing her weekly \$8.00 check at the Pioneer Savings Bank in town. Before leaving, she checks her bank book to find she has saved \$152.00 since opening her account six months ago. At the same time, a young man is across the street at the Post Office buying stamps and learning how to mail a package home to his

family. And, on the other side of town, members of another group are just arriving at the Wash n' Dry Laundromat where they will be doing their laundry for the week.

As varied and diversified as these activities may be, all are a part of a new program which originated a little over a year ago at the Helen Keller National Center, entitled "Community and Neighborhood Experiences." As the title implies, the program is geared to exposing and orienting the client here at the Center to the various resources available within the community. Secondly, and more importantly, the program is designed to provide the client with "real-life" experiences, whereby each client can directly apply the skills he or she has learned in the classroom, specifically proper mobility, communication, money management and time skills.

To accomplish these goals, the program consists of three phases: Preparation, Activity, and Follow-Up. The Preparation and Follow-Up phases are conducted primarily within the Communication Learning Center



Department. Here the clients review appropriate vocabulary involved in each activity, prepare any written notes necessary and read and write personal stories about their own experiences. The Activities phase takes place within the local shops and stores in the community. These activities consist of utilizing the laundromat, dry cleaners, post office, shoe repair, beauty/barber shop, grocery/department store, pharmacy and fast food as well as various restaurants. Clients look forward to this "hands-on" approach to learning, particularly where the activities and skills being developed are directly related to their personal, everyday needs.



HKNC client Nancy Hollis makes a stop at the local shoe repair shop as part of her "Community and Neighborhood Experience" program.

Since many skills are being addressed, an interdisciplinary team approach to teaching is necessary. Staff from the Communication Learning Center, Daily Living Skills Department, and Mobility are all involved in both program planning and implementation. In addition to preparing the client to be able to function independently within the community, staff members are also involved in educating the public. This public education or orientation phase is equally important. Thus far, the town of Port Washington has been more than receptive to the program and its clients. Clerks and shopkeepers have taken time out not only to become familiar with some of the special needs of the clients who may be frequenting their shops, but also to learn appropriate and varied means of communication. Consequently, both parties have had successful experiences, and have learned and grown together.

It's approximately 12:10 A.M. Having finished their errands, two clients are trying to decide where to have lunch—Luigi's

Pizza, POWA Chinese Take-Out, or the Coffee Shop. They decide to try the new "Deli" on the corner. The food is different and the vocabulary, too. However, they've come a long way from ordering only "The Big Three"—hamburger, French fries and a "Coke." Making decisions, trying new things, knowing what's out there, just having fun. After all, that's what it's all about!

## FIELD NOTES

By Dean Wyrick, M.S., C.R.C.

National Field Services Coordinator

### Regional Reps Promote Cooperation

One of the many impacts made by the Helen Keller National Center Regional Representatives is promoting and assisting agencies and programs throughout the country to work together in meeting the needs of deaf-blind persons. This has been done in all regions with a good degree of success. However, during the past year Mr. Dean Ericson and Ms. Connie Miles have especially made significant



strides to promote efforts of cooperation in their respective regions.

Interagency cooperation was designated by Dean Ericson as a target area of emphasis in the Southeastern Region this year. With continuing assistance by the Helen Keller National Center Regional Representative and the Rehabilitation Services Administration, four of the eight states in this region are finalizing written agreements developed in a spirit of cooperation with a multi-agency approach in servicing deaf-blind persons. Other states are considering similar action. A number of clients who would have otherwise gone unnoticed have already been referred to the Helen Keller National Center as a result of these efforts and ongoing consultation continues.

Over the past year, a major goal of Ms. Connie Miles, the HKNC San Francisco Regional Representative, has been to reestablish and chair the California Deaf-Blind Advisory Council. The Council, which is comprised of administrators of educational and community

programs around the state, has been reconvened in order to work in a cohesive and coordinated effort to establish services to deaf-blind residents of California. Deaf-blind consumers are encouraged to participate in the meetings. The regional RSA office has provided a great deal of support and leadership to this group. To date, the Council has conducted a state-wide survey in an attempt to establish demographic information on California's deaf-blind population. Early on in this effort, the need for more systematic census of the deaf-blind population, especially the geriatric deaf-blind, became apparent. Council projects currently underway include: (1) Petitioning the Public Utilities Commission to distribute TeleBraille devices free of charge to deaf-blind people throughout the state. (2) Developing a systematic referral process of deaf-blind clients to the Department of Rehabilitation's counselors for the deaf or for the blind. (3) Planning and implementing transitional inter-agency agreements which will facilitate the

continuity of services from secondary special education programs to appropriate habilitation or rehabilitation programs and, (4) Accessing mental health services for the deaf-blind population.

An ongoing series of continuing education sessions for professionals in the fields of deaf-blindness, deafness, and blindness are being scheduled. To date, seminars have focused on educational needs of deaf-blind adults, job modifications for deaf-blind workers and mental health needs of the deaf-blind. One consumer session focused on advocacy and another was held for the parents of recently identified Usher's Syndrome youths. (The last two sessions were held in cooperation with Gallaudet College.) The demand for services by deaf-blind people in California continues to grow rapidly. It is hoped that through this Council many of the identified needs will be met and that a strong networking system will be established that can be replicated throughout the country.



\*\*\*\*\*

We are pleased to announce plans to establish the tenth service region of the Helen Keller National Center. By March 1, 1984, we expect to have office space in Kansas City, and to have hired another regional representative. This new service region will cover the same states as Region VII of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA). It will include Nebraska and Kansas, currently served by the Center's Denver office, and Iowa and Missouri, presently served by the north central regional office in Chicago. All ten service regions will be aligned to match the RSA regions. Other regions and states to be affected will be: (1) Ohio, now served by the east central regional office in Philadelphia, will be assigned to the north central regional office in Chicago, and (2) Montana will be transferred from the northwestern region (Seattle) to the region served by our Denver regional office. The region now served by the Denver office, known as the Mountain-Plains Region, will be

designated the Rocky Mountain Region. All other states and service regions will remain unchanged.

There have been impressive benefits in having the Center's service areas aligned with the RSA regions. Also, services to the deaf-blind have more than doubled in states where the Center has opened new offices.

## THE DALLAS CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING WELCOMES PARTICIPATION BY THE DEAF-BLIND

By Eugenia Fisher

Information Referral/Community Education  
Dallas Center for Independent Living

Introduction. Independent living centers are fairly new organizations mandated to serve people with disabilities. There exist over two hundred centers providing a broad range of services. The programs are discussed later in this article.

There is one aspect of independent living center programs that makes them particularly useful to a deaf-blind person. That aspect

is flexibility of the programs. Flexibility of services is especially useful in the job placement and development program, a service which directly or indirectly contributes to the rest.

Job Placement. For the purposes of this discussion, let's talk about the job placement and development service at the Dallas Center for Independent Living. Two separate services exist. One works with people not yet ready for the job market, and the other assists those who are ready for employment.

Subjects include, but are not limited to, resume writing, interview techniques, appropriate personal management skills, and special issues relating to an individual's disability. Since individual needs are different, the subjects discussed vary. The groups are small. Therefore, individualization is possible.

Applicants falling into the job ready category also cover a variety of topics in their sessions. As always, people with a broad range of disabilities are represented.



This range calls for flexibility of discussion, especially when dealing with employment issues relating to disability. For example, a deaf-blind person might discuss how he/she plans to solve communication and mobility problems.

The staff calls this service a job club. It gives prospective applicants moral support for this awful task. This support is immensely valuable to anyone with a disability likely to face a lengthy quest for work. Also, this help lets the long-time job seeker know that others confront these same difficulties. Although others present at the job club may not have the same disability, many of the problems are similar. Deaf-blind job seekers may also derive benefits from talking with deaf or blind job applicants. These people could provide valuable information, especially if former job experiences are brought into the picture.

Accessible Housing. It is obvious that anyone, whether he/she has a job or not, is in need of housing. The term accessibility

has different meanings for different disabilities. A person in a wheelchair, for example, needs lodging with certain specified criteria. A deaf-blind person has other considerations. Independent living centers are set up to provide help in locating accessible housing, whatever that term means for a particular disability.

Transportation. Most independent living centers provide transportation services of varying degrees. The Dallas Center for Independent Living operates a referral and certification service for disabled people unable to use the regular city transit system. This service could be very helpful to the deaf-blind.

Advocacy. Independent living centers are responsible for providing advocacy services to the disabled. As most disabled people have discovered, a third party is necessary at times because of misconceptions and outright discrimination. For instance, once suitable housing has been located, it may be necessary to convince the landlord to

accept a disabled person. In addition, employers may be unwilling to consider hiring the disabled. The duty of the Center staff member responsible for advocacy is to arbitrate these problems. This does not mean that the disabled person has no responsibility in this area. However, it does mean that centers for independent living can act as a resource.

Counseling. The Center offers a counseling service. This service is to enable disabled people to talk about feelings blocking their functioning in everyday life. The Center's focus is to deal with problems associated with a person's disability. If difficulties arise at home or at work relating to a disability, then the Center's counselor can give the needed support.

Information and Referral. The purpose of this department is to enable the disabled to make use of community and national resources. The Dallas Center for Independent Living has the personnel available to put a limited number of materials into Braille, and there is



also an interpreter to assist with communication. Unless the disabled can keep abreast of the latest information available, progress in every area of life will necessarily be slowed.

Reader/Writer Program. This program is intended to serve print handicapped clients. It is supposed to help those with dyslexia, the mentally disabled, and those with neurological problems.

Attendant Referral. Many people with disabilities could live independently with the assistance of a personal attendant. This program could be expanded to meet the needs of the deaf-blind. One possible expansion might include finding sighted guides for special occasions. Such an expansion would not involve alteration of the program as it now exists.

Conclusion. All of the programs mentioned here are designed to meet the needs of the majority of the disabled. Centers are now focusing on meeting the needs of deaf-blind adults. Therefore, Center staff members are

attending conferences to learn more about the services needed by the deaf-blind.

However, we, the uninformed, need and want comments from you, the deaf-blind. Although we may consult numerous professionals, the input received may not be the same. Since this information is essential for us to know, the staff of the Dallas Center for Independent Living would be interested in hearing from the deaf-blind themselves. Although our services are limited to the north Texas area, it would be helpful for us to gather information from people located outside our service area. After reviewing the ideas, we plan to share them with other centers throughout the country.

If you would like to give the Center staff ideas for serving the deaf-blind, please write or call. The Center has a Superphone, and letters can be sent in Braille. The address is: Dallas Center for Independent Living, 8625 King George, Suite 210, Dallas, TX 75235. Telephone: 214-631-6900.

Please contact the Center soon.

## COMMUNITY EMPLOYERS HONORED AT HKNC

By Barbara Hausman

Assistant Director of Community Education

A special luncheon meeting was recently held to honor 13 community employers who have voluntarily provided valuable "work experience" opportunities during the past two years, for deaf-blind clients from the HKNC. The partnership formed between the HKNC staff and clients, and the private sector, permits persons who are both visually and hearing-impaired to prepare for future job placement and independence after completing their training. For many clients the program represents their first chance to compete in the outside work force, which is important in the development of self-image. Each deaf-blind client is matched by his vocational rehabilitation counselor with an appropriate work site and each "community provider" supervises the client and his assigned tasks, simulating the demands of the real "World of Work."





Seated in foreground (l. to r.) are Dan Emeny, HKNC client; Diane Goldberg, HKNC Interpreter/Instructor; and John Schlingheyde, director of Housekeeping, St. Francis Hospital, Roslyn, N.Y. Dan Emeny is demonstrating a practice interview for the observers in background. (Photo by John Meehan)

Clients described the preparation and support they received from their counselors and from CAP (Career Awareness Program) at the Center. Rhonda Regenwether, a client from Delmar, Iowa, said through an interpreter that when she began her 8-week program at St. Francis Hospital in Roslyn, New York, and was taught how to fold hospital towels and sheets, "I was nervous about learning. I felt scared."

Employers like Edna Turner, director of the Twin Pine Food Co-op, Port Washington, said she was nervous, too, when the co-op got its first worker from the Center. But she did learn how to communicate. "The program has broken down tremendous barriers. I had my own hangups about blind and deaf people and didn't realize it. But we've all gotten past the myths."

Ms. Regenwether's supervisor at the hospital, Alfonzo Hilton, said that at first, "I was super negative" about the training. I thought I would lose time, having to train the new workers. Now they're as fast as any other employee. I want them to stay." Al's boss, John Schlingheyde, director of Housekeeping, commented, "The deaf-blind clients who have been placed in the linen department have been outstanding, responsible workers and positive additions to our work force. We are now planning to expand the program into other areas of the hospital."

Jan Barbieri, director of the Port Washington Children's Center, explained that



the deaf-blind client who had worked as a teacher's aide with her pre-school youngsters now has a full time job at an Oklahoma childrens' center.

Other HKNC clients have been placed in various jobs at the Port Washington Library, a local hardware store, Burger King, a florist shop, delicatessen, nursing home, at the United Methodist Church and the North Shore Science Museum.

This is truly a success story, and HKNC appreciates the efforts of all the participants. It was quite apparent during the meeting, that the "work experience program" designed to benefit deaf-blind persons has enriched the hearing-sighted world as well.

#### LOUISIANA CONSORTIUM ON DEAF-BLINDNESS

On September 16, 1983 Governor David C. Treen, of Louisiana, announced the establishment of the nation's first Deaf-Blind Coordination and Implementation Consortium to serve the nearly 800 Louisiana citizens stricken by the dual handicap of deafness



and blindness.

Roger P. Guissinger, Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Resources (DHHR), was appointed by the governor to convene the consortium and coordinate the development of programs and services to aid the deaf-blind population.

"The state of Louisiana has the largest population and incidence of deaf-blind persons in the world," Governor Treen said. "Additionally, the inordinately high number of deaf-blind individuals born during the rubella epidemic of the sixties are beginning to reach the age where independent living skills training is required."

The consortium will operate at four levels, Treen said. They are local, state-wide, federal/regional and national.

Local and state level participants will be appointed by the governor and will reflect those state agencies, organizations and consumer groups which work with the deaf, the blind and the deaf-blind. Federal/regional and national organizations will be encouraged

to participate in the consortium as well.

State agencies comprising the consortium thus far are the Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services, Department of Labor and the Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council in addition to DHHR.

Initial research indicates there are between 700 and 800 persons in Louisiana suffering from Usher's Syndrome (congenital deafness accompanied by later development of blindness), Guissinger said. He added that through research 152 persons under the age of 22 have been identified as receiving services in state institutions and public schools.

The inability to identify and locate the deaf-blind population complicates service planning, he stated.

Governor Treen said "the consortium will be charged with the responsibility to:

"Define necessary services to deaf-blind persons.

"Prioritize needed services and the

method by which they are to be delivered.

"Coordinate the development of inter-agency service agreements between state agencies and non-profit corporations.

"Guide the cooperative funding efforts to make maximum use of state and federal dollars.

"Oversee the implementation of services to the deaf-blind.

"Evaluate the effectiveness of service delivery.

"Develop a statewide plan for coordinated service delivery in urban and rural settings.

"Develop a model for use by other states."

The consortium will work in conjunction with the Helen Keller National Center, the South Central Region Educational Center for Services to Deaf-Blind Children and Their Families, and the federal government in developing a national demonstration project to coordinate service delivery to the deaf-blind, Treen said.

Additionally, DHHR, with the Developmental



Disabilities Council and Independent Living Center, Inc., is developing a model independent living program which shall include a six-bed group home in the New Orleans area.

The Helen Keller National Center, the Federal Rehabilitation Services Administration and the South Central Regional Services Center have provided assurances of support in the development of this project.

Treen said that the unique service barriers created by the fact that Usher's Syndrome can manifest itself at any time and that a special means of communication is needed to train individuals suffering the affliction are among the reasons for the formation of the consortium.

### HKNC PLACEMENT PROGRAM EXPANDS

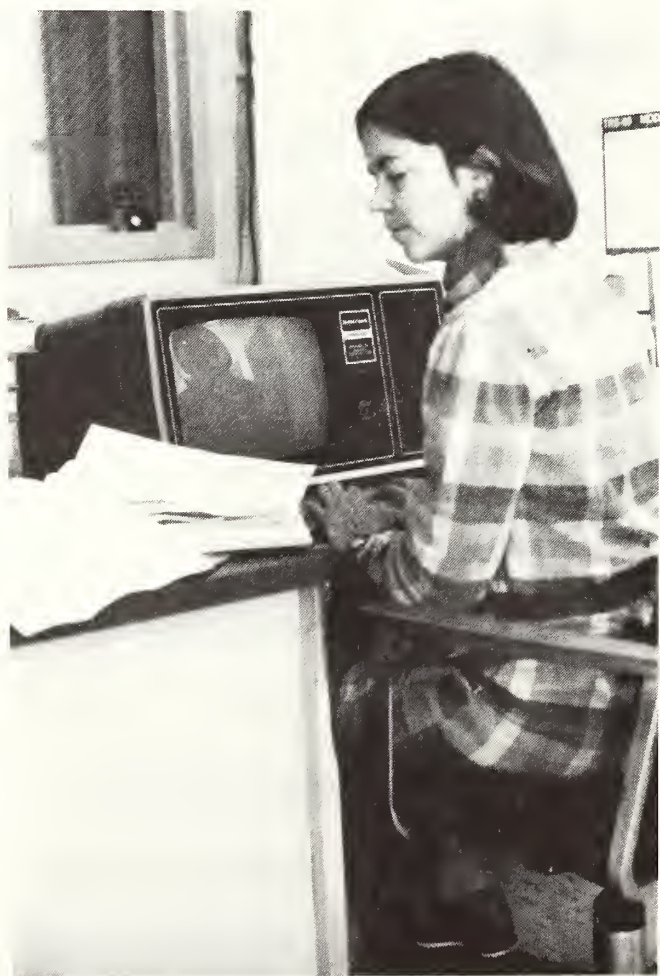
By Melissa Raue, HKNC Placement Specialist

The size of the placement department at the Helen Keller National Center has recently doubled—from one to two persons. Of course, the placement of any trainee is a

team effort, accomplished through the cooperation of the Center's regional representatives, counselors, and placement specialists, and the trainee's home state counselor. Often other people in the trainee's home area, such as interpreters, transportation providers, and staff of Centers for Independent Living also make invaluable contributions to a successful placement.

The recent addition of another professional worker to its placement department will allow the Center to expand and intensify its placement services. The new placement specialist, Marcia Powdermaker, will concentrate on serving the many trainees who will work in sheltered workshops and work activity centers. For some trainees, this is an appropriate work goal because they are not able to perform their jobs as quickly or accurately as competitive work demands, but they want to work. Other trainees may have the potential for competitive work but need the experience, guidance, and support that a workshop setting can provide. These trainees may

work in a workshop temporarily, until they are ready to advance to an "outside" job. Another group of employees chooses to remain in a workshop because they prefer the workshop environment, where there are other deaf, blind, or deaf-blind workers. The specialized rehabilitation services offered in a workshop means for these people that they can be independent, have better work performance, and enjoy a sense of accomplishment. In the National Industries for the Blind (NIB) work-



Melissa Raue, HKNC Placement Specialist  
(Photo by Linda Salvo)

shops, the average hourly wage in 1982 was \$3.58 per hour. There are over 400 workers who are deaf-blind, or hard-of-hearing blind, in NIB sheltered workshops, sharing in the \$23 million in wages that these work places pay yearly. They also have the opportunity to advance in their jobs,



and of being promoted within the workshop if possible.

Ms. Powdermaker will be providing workshop placement, evaluation of workshops, preparation of clients for work, and training of workshop staff to better serve deaf-blind employees, as well as sharing in placement duties.

Now, with two placement specialists on staff, the Center can also intensify its services to clients in the areas of work readiness training and off-campus work experience. The Career Awareness Program (CAP) at the Center provides discussions of appropriate work behavior; exploration of work preferences, abilities, decisions, and conflicts; guest speakers, both hearing-sighted and deaf-blind, who share their work experiences; how to find jobs; and interviewing practices. With the CAP group added to the work readiness counselling of the Center's counselors, clients who complete their training can leave better prepared than ever before to find and keep the jobs that are right

for them.



HKNC client Gary Stephens is shown sorting coins  
for the Center's Accounting Department.

(Photo by Linda Salvo)

A common topic shared by the CAP group is the work experiences of its members. Through the hard work of many of the Center's staff, and the cooperation and acceptance of the Port Washington community, new work experiences for clients are constantly being developed. These now include: food store stock person, clerical machine operator, hospital linen worker, chambermaid, patient aide, companion in a nursing home, animal caretaker, fast-food preparer, day-care aide, floral arranger, lawnmower repairer, story-teller, and

data entry clerk. Possible future job opportunities now being developed include hospital sterilization department, public relations, hospital dietary work, and mail processing. Some of these job experiences are offered at more than one site, giving more than one trainee at a time an opportunity to experience the same kind of work. We have seen again and again the value of this program in clarifying goals and building confidence in clients.

Yet another new placement project is the Center's Job Bank. Quite a few readers have responded to the questionnaire published in NAT-CENT NEWS. They have included deaf-blind persons in the computer field, education, business, engineering, electronics, and industry. Men and women who have started their own businesses, or work at home, also shared information. We now have eighty people in the Job Bank. This data will be placed in the Center's computer and should be ready to use by summer. Our sincere thanks to those who have already contributed to this project; and to those workers who haven't yet answered:



join in and be a part of this project—we need your assistance!

## THE KANSAS PROJECT

In June 1983 the Helen Keller National Center for Deaf-Blind Youths and Adults received a grant from Kansas Division of Services for the Blind to establish a statewide delivery system of vocational rehabilitation services to deaf-blind persons in Kansas.

The project will seek to provide some of the most comprehensive services available to deaf-blind adults through a state vocational rehabilitation agency. The project's objectives include statewide identification of the deaf-blind population, assessment of the population's needs, inservice training to service providers, outreach and cooperation with other state and private agencies, consultation and support to field personnel, job placement assistance, cooperative planning with educational programs for deaf-blind children and others

The "Kansas Project," as it has become

known, is staffed by a full-time coordinator and half-time secretary. Additional support is provided by the Center's Regional Representative—Ms. Susan Olson, with supportive training offered by the Center's National Training Team.

For more information, please contact:  
Ms. Mary Ellen O'Brien, Deaf-Blind Specialist,  
Services for the Blind, 2700 West Sixth St.,  
Biddle Building, First Floor, Topeka, Kansas  
66606. Telephone: (913) 296-3354.

\*\*\*\*\*

### A PRAYER

Lord, give me courage and the grace to bear  
life's tribulations with humility,  
that I may learn, through triumph and despair,  
what happiness these simple things can be;

To give without desiring to receive,  
to love without requiring to be loved,  
to revive faith in those who doubt or grieve,  
to move the heart that never has been moved.

—Robert J. Smithdas

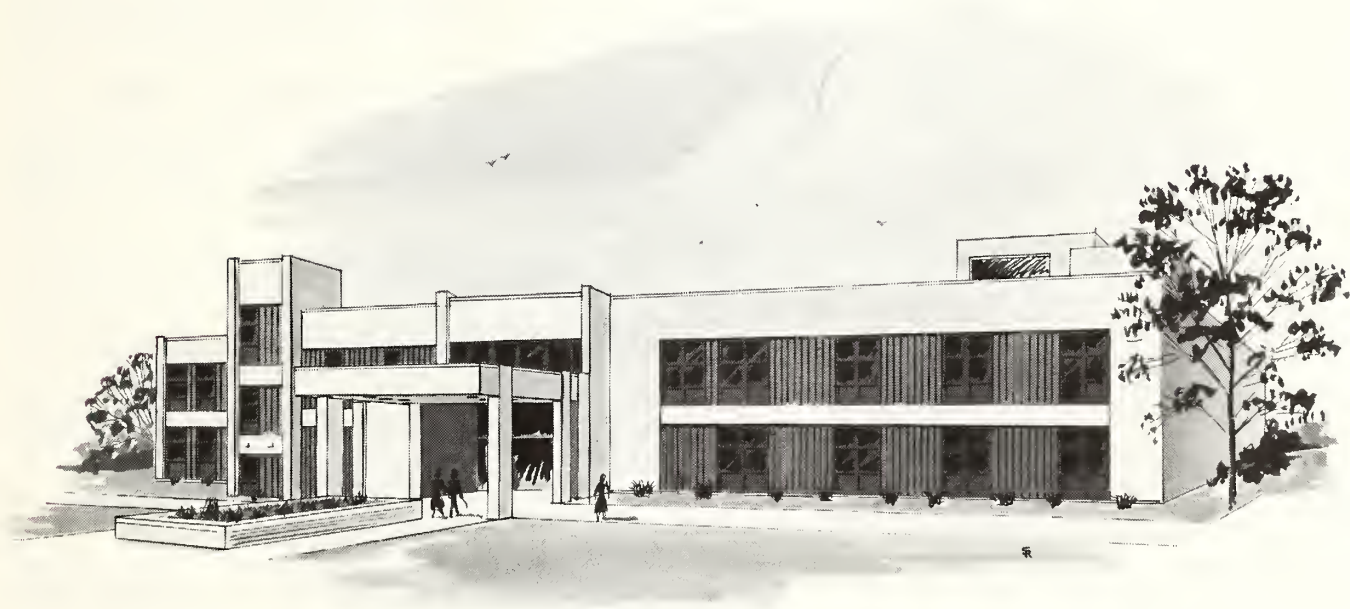
(From "City of the Heart")







# *NAT-CENT NEWS*



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**Vol. 14 No. 3  
May, 1984**

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## EDITORIAL

## INTERNATIONAL NEWSLETTER FOR THE DEAF-BLIND

By Robert J. Smithdas, L.H.D., Litt.D.

One of the major projected goals established by the Second International Conference on Services to the Deaf-Blind, held at Hannover, West Germany in July, 1980, was the production and distribution of an international newsletter for deaf-blind readers. Delegates at that conference were in overwhelming agreement that such a newsletter was urgently needed to inform the deaf-blind population of the world of existing services in various countries, to provide information that would keep them abreast of new developments that could help them to use their potentials to the fullest degree, and serve as a vehicle for the exchange and sharing of ideas.

Two problems became evident almost immediately; how would such a newsletter be funded and who would accept responsibility for editing material and final publication? Mr. Anders Arnör, Honorary Secretary-General

of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind, sent out applications for financial support to several agencies of the United Nations, and eventually obtained a grant from the Disabled Persons Unit of the UN to pay for the cost of the first issues. Eventually, Mr. Arnör also contacted Mrs. Beroz Vacha, principal of the Helen Keller Institute for the Deaf and the Deaf-Blind in India, who agreed to serve as editor and oversee the publication of the newsletter.

The first issue of THE INTERNATIONAL NEWSLETTER FOR THE DEAF-BLIND appeared in the summer of 1983, and it proved to be an excellent publication that provided a broad range of interesting topics related to the field of deaf-blindness. It was a commendable beginning, and Mrs. Vacha displayed excellent editorial skills.

However, during the Third International Conference, a new problem was brought to light. The first issue of the newsletter had been printed in contracted English braille, and many braille readers in countries where

other languages were used were unfamiliar with the contractions in English braille. A decision was made that all future issues of the newsletter would be in braille Grade One, thus making its contents more accessible to an international readership.

The December, 1983, issue of the newsletter recently arrived from India, and once again it is an excellent review of happenings in the field of deaf-blindness. In particular, it gives the highlights of the Third International Conference, held in Manama City, Bahrain, last November. For those who are interested in obtaining copies of future issues, inquiries should be sent to:

Mrs. Beroz Vacha  
The Helen Keller Institute for  
the Deaf and Deaf-Blind  
Municipal Secondary School  
South Wing, Ground Floor  
Near 'S' Bridge  
N.M. Joshi Marg  
Byculla (W)  
Bombay 400 011, India



## LAURA BRIDGMAN—PERKINS' FIRST MIRACLE

By Richard F. Snow

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AMERICAN HERITAGE, August/September 1978

By the time Charles Dickens came to America in 1842 he was already the most popular writer of his day, and when he landed in Boston he was offered no end of things to do. None of them, however, interested him as much as his visit to a thirteen-year-old girl. "Her face was radiant with intelligence and pleasure," he wrote. "Her dress, arranged by herself, was a pattern of neatness and simplicity... her writing book was on the desk she leaned upon.... A doll she had dressed lay near..." When Dickens picked up the doll, he found a green ribbon wrapped around its eyes, a miniature of the one worn by the girl herself. Her name was Laura Bridgman, and she was a blind deaf-mute.

She had once lived in a sort of cell, said Dickens, "impervious to any ray of

light, or particle of sound; with her poor white hand peeping through a chink in the wall, beckoning to some good man for help.... Long before I looked upon her the help had come."



Laura Bridgman (R) with Oliver Caswell at Perkins

It had come from Samuel Gridley Howe, an able, energetic, imaginative man, who, after a vigorous early career devoted to helping drive the Turks out of Greece, had returned to Boston to found the Perkins Institution, a school for blind children. Howe did so well helping his charges that he became interested in teaching the deaf-blind. According to the wisdom of the day, all that could be done for such people was to feed them; they could not be educated. Nevertheless, Howe determined to try and began to seek a suitable subject. In 1837 he got word of Laura Bridgman.

Laura had been born near Hanover, New Hampshire, in 1829 to the common world of light and sound but when she was two years old scarlet fever burned away her sight, her hearing, and most of her senses of smell and taste. It took her two years to regain her strength and then, trapped in her black and silent world, she gradually became more and more difficult to control. By the time she was seven, her father could command her



obedience only by stamping hard on the floor near her. When Howe appeared at Laura's home, the girl's parents were happy to have him take her in hand.

At the Perkins Institution, Howe left her alone for two weeks, letting her get acquainted with her new companions, and then started her education. As he saw it, he had two choices; he could help her expand the natural language of gestures she had already begun to develop, or he could attempt the far more difficult task of teaching her the alphabet, thereby giving her some real understanding of the world she could never see. He decided on the latter course.

He took common objects—a spoon, a fork, a key—labeled them with raised letters, and let her handle them. Then he gave her detached labels bearing the same words. After a while, she learned to attach the proper labels to the objects. The next step was to give her individual letters and have her spell out words. She made progress, but it was slow going, and oddly disappointing:

"The process," said Howe, "(was) mechanical, and the success about as great as teaching a very knowing dog a variety of tricks."

When the breakthrough finally came, it came suddenly: "She perceived that here was a way by which she could make herself up a sign of anything that was in her own mind; and show it to another mind; and at once her countenance lighted up with a human expression: it was no longer a dog or a parrot: it was an immortal spirit, eagerly seizing upon a new link of union with other spirits!"

That moment was the signal triumph of Howe's career. Knowing, now, that a true intelligence stirred behind Laura's dead eyes, he was elated to discover the breadth of her curiosity. She became fascinated by the concept of colors—she developed a curious aversion to red—and was intrigued by geography, though she occasionally gave way to despair as she began to grasp how big and various a place the world was. Once, using what she called "finger talking," she asked her instructor, "Are you not very tired living

so many years?" Eventually she grew sophisticated enough to be an ardent Free Soil Advocate.

Within two years of her arrival at the school, she began her first letter: "Laura will write letter to mother...." She learned to knit, crochet, and sew, and developed a lively and affectionate personality that charmed the visitors who came to see her.

They came in the hundreds, for by this time Laura and her mentor had become famous. Howe had published reports on her progress from the beginning, and the word had spread throughout Europe and America. Not only did Laura represent an extraordinary pedagogical achievement, she also stood for something her era took very seriously indeed—the invincibility of the human spirit. "The good little girl," Thomas Carlyle wrote Howe from England, "one loves her to the very heart.... That little question of hers, 'Do horses sit up late?' stirs us to laughter, to tears... and probably to as kind a mood as human speech alone can awaken in a human heart."



Laura came to the end of her formal education when she was twenty, but she stayed at the Perkins Institution for the rest of her life. She knitted, made beds, cleaned, and occasionally taught sewing, very strictly, to the pupils. She became a busy correspondent, and in her later years wrote poetry—simple, devout verse filled with images of darkness and light:

Joy is a blazing flame,

Darkness is frosty.

A good sleep is a white curtain,

A bad sleep is a black curtain.

She died of pneumonia at the age of sixty. "It has been better for her generation," Howe had said, "that she lived in it." And it has been better for the generations that followed. When Anne Sullivan, herself a graduate of the Perkins Institution, undertook to educate a wild little girl named Helen Keller, she set out knowing that the road ahead had been traveled before.

## FIELD NOTES

By Dean Wyrick, M.S., C.R.C.

National Field Services Coordinator

This column has usually been devoted to reporting various events, activities, and developments which have an impact on services to deaf-blind persons throughout the country. We would like to use the column in this issue to recognize the Helen Keller National Center's senior regional representative, Mrs. Margaret B. Davies, who will be retiring this July.

Mrs. Davies has been the representative in the Center's Philadelphia office since its opening in January, 1973. At that time, the Center had only four regions, and for several years Mrs. Davies' service region covered an area greater than the present New England, Mid-Atlantic, and East-Central regions—covering the states from Maine to Virginia, and including Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Mrs. Davies was a pioneer in promoting services to deaf-blind persons from this large

area, and over the years she encouraged hundreds of individuals to enter training at the Helen Keller National Center or agencies in their local communities, many of whom significantly improved their lives, obtained employment, and received special awards and recognition for their achievements. One client, for example, was selected a few years ago as Handicapped Federal Employee of the Year, following placement at a United States naval facility, after completing training at the Center.



Margaret Davies (center), with Paige Berry (left) and Sherry Raymont (right), who work in programs for the deaf-blind at agencies affiliated with the Helen Keller National Center.



The following extract from our annual report is a good example of how Mrs. Davies has played a role in the lives of deaf-blind persons:

Ms. B, a 55-year old deaf-blind woman who had been institutionalized for over 30 years was contacted by the Philadelphia regional representative at a state training school. With assistance from the regional representative, Ms. B entered the evaluation and training program at the Helen Keller National Center and significantly improved her personal skills, communication, and daily living skills. While enrolled at the Center, its social workers, after much difficulty, were able to determine that Ms. B did have relatives, and made contact with her brother, who was only 3 years old at the time their mother died and Ms. B was placed in the state institution. Ms. B's brother and sister were placed in a foster home, and neither remembered their deaf-blind sister. However, after contact with the Center's social worker, Ms. B's brother made arrangements to visit her

at the Center. Following the visit and at the request of her brother, and after careful consideration and planning, arrangements were also made for Ms. B to move in with them when she completed her training program. Follow-up by the regional representative finds a very happy Ms. B living with her brother, his wife, and their four children. Ms. B's chores include keeping her room clean and neat, changing her bed, and helping with the freezing of vegetables and other foodstuffs. Not only is Ms. B very happy with her increased independence, but she especially enjoys the love and relationships of being with her family. On one occasion the regional representative found Ms. B doing needlework, the family dog sitting at her feet, and the children hugging and kissing her, or sitting in her lap, enjoying mutual attention and affection, of which she had been deprived for over 30 years."

Before joining the staff at the Helen Keller National Center, Margaret worked for 17 years at The Industrial Home for the

Blind, assisting with various legislative committees which proposed improved services for the blind and deaf-blind. Margaret Davies has had an impact on the lives of hundreds of deaf-blind persons, and we know she will continue doing so in her own way even after retirement.

## HORTICULTURE FOR THE DEAF-BLIND

By Madeline Cohen  
Assistant Instructor

Horticulture, the art and science of growing plants, has been enjoyed all over the world for centuries. Its wide appeal makes it also useful as a therapeutic tool. At HKNC, horticulture is one of the many programs offered as part of the rehabilitation process. It serves two functions. First, it provides clients with a constructive and rewarding leisure time activity. In addition, those clients who show special interest and ability can utilize horticulture as a potential vocational goal.

Hobbies enrich people's lives by adding enjoyment to their daily activities. Many



day-to-day actions are done out of necessity, but hobbies are purely for one's own pleasure. They provide relaxation, self-esteem, stimulation, and often result in increased socialization with others.

Providing clients with leisure time activities is an important step in their training program. Many clients who enter HKNC have few or no hobbies. Because they haven't developed the skills to utilize their free time constructively, they often display unacceptable forms of behavior. By providing those clients with creative activities, their leisure time can now be spent pursuing acceptable means of expression.

Horticulture is well suited as a hobby for many disabled individuals, especially HKNC's deaf/blind clients. It can be tailored to the level of functioning of any client. It can be simplified for those with few skills, and yet provide challenges for those who are more capable. Also, it involves a variety of senses. Smell, taste, sight and touch are all stimulated while



Madeline Cohen instructs Client John Santanastasio in methods of plant watering.



Clients Susan Barlow, Margaret Reis and Michael Voytosh (l. to r.), are setting out plants in HKNC's square-foot garden.



performing horticultural tasks. Also, certain activities, like outdoor gardening, are beneficial as a form of physical exercise.

One of the unique qualities about horticulture is that it is a living medium. Plants are always growing and changing and need constant attention. Clients develop a sense of responsibility towards their plants and learn to be dependable and make decisions regarding their care.

As a vocational tool, horticulture is a viable goal for many clients. The program at HKNC covers a wide variety of skills, including basic plant care, outdoor gardening, plant propagation, bulb culture, and decorative plant projects. Upon completion of the horticulture program, clients who show ability are ready to work in greenhouses, floral shops, nurseries, or garden centers.

Horticulture is a useful tool when combined with other therapeutic programs. It enriches the lives of those who participate and so is an important part of the rehabilitation process.



## REFLECTED GLORY



Michelle Smithdas (l.) with Barbara Hausman

Each year the Pilot Club of Sayville, Long Island, New York, an international business and professional women's organization (similar to the Rotary) presents an award to

"the Handicapped Professional Woman of the Year". The recipient's name is then submitted to the District office (Northeast-Potomac District), and then to the Pilot Club International.

This year Michelle J. Smithdas was chosen by the club at its annual awards dinner meeting on March 7th, and she was also selected as the winner of the District award, which will be presented at their District Convention on April 28 in Boston, Massachusetts, where she will address the Awards Luncheon.

Michelle, who has been on the staff of the Helen Keller National Center as an

assistant instructor in its Communication Learning Center for eight years, was cited for her dedicated work as a teacher, her service to the community and as a public advocate for the disabled, particularly the deaf-blind, and for her personal achievements in overcoming her handicaps.

### NINTH ANNUAL NATIONAL AADB CONVENTION

The 1984 American Association of the Deaf-Blind (AADB) convention will be held in Seattle, Washington, June 24-July 1. Seattle's deaf-blind community has been working hard to make this a very special event. Accommodations, as well as all of the meetings, will be coordinated on the University of Washington's campus, with safe and easy access to workshops, meetings, dining and recreational areas, and public transportation.

Seattle is fortunate in having a large number of sign language interpreters who are adept at interpreting for and guiding deaf-blind people.

Exciting events are planned for the convention, including performance of a play written by a deaf-blind woman about deaf-blind people. Workshops, revolving around the convention's theme "Community", will focus on developing resources and skills necessary to transform a group of individuals into a vital and supportive community—a phenomena which has already occurred in Seattle's deaf-blind community. There will be plenty of time to relax and enjoy dining, dancing, massage, sharing talents at the arts and crafts fair, seeing and using the latest technology used by deaf-blind people, and touring the landmarks of this beautiful city.

Fees for deaf-blind persons attending the convention will be \$180.00 per person; there will be no charge for volunteers who agree to serve as interpreter/guides during the week; all others who wish to attend, but do not qualify or desire to serve as volunteer interpreter/guides, must pay \$212.00.

Forms are now available. To obtain these, please write to:



AADB CONVENTION, 1984

P.O Box 20354

Seattle, WA 98102

These must be filled out and returned by May 15, together with remittance of the fee.

The host committee promises, "this will be an event you won't want to miss! Come and celebrate this ninth annual convention of the AADB with us!"

## DEAF-BLIND RESIDENCE AIDE REACHES OUT

By Melissa Raue

Placement Specialist

The Helen Keller National Center has a unique program called the Teacher Aide Training Program (TATP). This program trains deaf-blind trainees who have shown exceptional aptitude during their training program here to become teacher aides, residence aides, etc., if they so desire. The twelve-week program is closely supervised by the heads of the department where the trainee works during the program. The trainee is helped to learn to interact with a variety of types of clients,

to develop lesson plans, to keep good case notes and to write final progress summaries. The trainee is evaluated not only on general work qualities such as adaptability, dependability, use of supervision, and initiative, but also on skills particular to working as a teacher aide with deaf-blind students such as insight, rapport, communication skills, ability to motivate, and understanding of the rehabilitation process. The strengths and weaknesses found in this evaluation are shared with the TATP participant to aid in their professional awareness and growth.

One trainee who successfully completed the TATP is Rosa Perea, a young woman who grew up deaf and lost her sight while studying at Gallaudet College, when she came to HKNC. Mrs. Perea had worked her way through college as a cottage manager at a school for the deaf, as well as other jobs. She knew, therefore, that she enjoyed this kind of work and decided to work after leaving HKNC. As Ms. Perea's TATP drew to a close and her strengths and preferences became clear,

the placement process swung into action.

Some job sites previously contacted as possibilities were eliminated as being unacceptable due to a student population which didn't fit into Ms. Perea's strongest or preferred areas, or as being too isolated from medical care and community support. An initial mailing of 10 introductory letters and Ms. Perea's resume were sent to schools and agencies serving the deaf-blind in Texas by the Placement Specialist. These were followed up by telephone calls. Other agencies which did not receive letters were called to evaluate whether they would be appropriate. In the meantime, the regional representative in Texas added ten more names to the list, using the same letter and enclosing a resume. In this manner, back and forth, Ms. Perea's resume was widely circulated to 40 different potential employers.

During this process, Ms. Perea was invited to interview at the Denton State School. The Regional Representative made the arrangements for Rosa to get to Denton, Texas



and to assist her in the interview. After examining the program, which involved children who sometimes act out and therefore need to be closely supervised, Ms. Perea decided that she could not accept the job partly because she is totally blind. This was disappointing for everyone, but was the correct decision, as we had identified during the TATP that this was a possible problem area. The process of application and follow up by the Center's placement specialist and its regional representative continued.



Rosa Perea,  
former HKNC  
client, now  
works as a  
Residence Aide  
at the Southwest  
Center for the  
Hearing Impaired  
in San Antonio,  
Texas.

Finally, four months into this process, a call came from the Southwest Center for the Hearing Impaired in San Antonio, Texas;

a position as Residence Aide funded through V.I.S.T.A. (Volunteers in Service to America, a domestic Peace Corps) was available. This job involved, in part, being a positive role model as a bright active deaf-blind person, a person with the knowledge and sensitivity to help young people who are deaf and blind. In addition, it offered medical benefits and the communication environment important to Rosa for her well-being. Rosa interviewed for the job immediately and accepted the job in March, 1983.

At the time this article is being written in March 1984, Rosa has been at SWCHI for a year, very successfully performing her duties as a residence aide.

### TACTILE COMMUNICATOR WINS APPROVAL

According to Herbert Cohen, electronics engineer at the Helen Keller National Center who was responsible for the development of the Tactile Communicator, this versatile device will soon be made available to deaf-blind citizens of Canada. The Helen Keller

National Center has received certification of approval to sell and use the device in Canada from the Canadian Department of Communication Licensing, the equivalent of the United States Federal Communication Commission.

The TC, as it is affectionately known to those who already own one, is an attractive, compact device which is easily installed, and that signals a deaf-blind or deaf person when doorbells ring, when the telephone rings, or when a burglar or fire alarm sounds off.

\* \* \* \* \*

Smith-Kettlewell Institute of Visual Services, Medical Research Institute of San Francisco, has been evaluating our Tactile Communicator and reported their findings in their Annual Report. Along with a description of the product and two suggestions for modification, they concluded that "the TC functions are clearly needed by deaf-blind people living at home." The laboratory test "has impressed us with many fine features. It is attractive, the transmitter is very



lightweight, installation of the system is easy, and performance of the unit is reliable. The manual for the TC is extremely well-written." They are also conducting tests by deaf-blind people in their own homes.

Herb Cohen has also developed a new micro-processor-based "TIMER" which is built into the TC transmitter. This feature will allow a deaf-blind person to load time into the unit vibro-tactually, start the countdown, and read the amount of time left in the "timer" vibro-tactually in the pocket-size receiver. The "timer" also has a visual 3-digit display for the sighted-deaf population. This prototype is being tested in the Home Management Department.

### A DARK AND SILENT WORLD

By Linda Hembree, Staff Writer  
(From the Spartanburg Herald-Journal,  
Spartanburg, North Carolina)

Hers is a world of darkness and silence. Her eyes don't see the faces of those with whom she speaks. Her ears never hear their

words. Her hands are instruments of communication—her fingers speak, she hears through her palms. Only her smile lets you know she understands.



Herald-Journal Photo by Linda Hembree  
Deaf and Blind Minnie Forister responds to a question spelled into her palm  
by Lynda Smith at Whitten Village.

Minnie Forister, one of the few totally deaf and blind people in South Carolina, has been living at Whitten Center for 30 years. She's not mentally retarded as are most of the residents, but, even with her sharp mind, she conveys little knowledge of the outside world.

Although she was born neither deaf nor blind, Minnie shows little remembrance of her life as a sighted, hearing person. If the memories are there, she keeps them quietly to herself.

Minnie committed herself to Whitten Center because she "had no where else to go" after her husband, 40 years her senior, died when she was in her ninth month of pregnancy. He had worked at the center and she considered it home. Her son, Otto, now 30, was born there and makes it his home, also.

Minnie says her handicaps were not inherited, but it is believed they were since her son has some of the same problems, according to Lynda Smith of the South Carolina Commission for the Blind. Minnie attended the South Carolina School for the Deaf and Blind at Cedar Spring where she was educated as a deaf person.

"She had to be able to hear at some time because she has some ability to talk," Mrs. Smith explains. Her loss of vision came gradually, although she had severe problems



with her sight as a young girl.

It is possible to live in a dark and silent world. Minnie is proof of that. She bathes and dresses herself and keeps her room at the center in order. Her clothes are neatly folded in the drawers or hung in the closet. She's touched the garments many times and knows each piece and its color by its feel.

Memory is sharp. She keeps track of the day of the week and the day of the month. She knows ages and birthdays, and most amazing of all, according to Mrs. Smith she remembers the placement of photographs in her album. She can remember where each one is and who is in the picture," Mrs. Smith says.

Minnie returned to Whitten last week after spending seven months at the Helen Keller Institute in New York. There she learned how to cope with her world with less frustration, and hopes to begin work soon in a workshop in Clinton.

When Minnie's blindness was imminent, she was angered, but she communicates little

about how she felt. She experienced some behavioral problems and was referred to the South Carolina Commission for the Blind.

"That's when I became involved," Mrs. Smith explains. "Minnie was very withdrawn. She would push you away when you tried to communicate with her. All she said was 'I can't see. I can't hear.' This was her way of reacting to becoming blind."

Mrs. Smith believes that one of the biggest links in Minnie's learning to communicate again has been her association with the deaf community in Clinton. They visit her and take her to church and all their other activities. "Once she had peers who were deaf, she blossomed," Mrs. Smith says.

"To see a deaf community really supportive of a deaf and blind person is unusual," she explains. "Deaf people are afraid of becoming blind, and they often fear catching something from blind people. The Commission for the Blind is trying to educate these people that they have nothing to fear."

"A lot of deaf people who become blind

get lost in the cracks," she adds. "There are a few programs designed specifically for them."

Because of their concern about this problem, the South Carolina Commission for the Blind sought and received a grant from the Helen Keller Center in New York in 1980 to establish a project to locate deaf and blind people in South Carolina. When the grant expired this year, it was hoped that the state would pick up financing of the project. The state did, and Mrs. Smith says that now they (Commission for the Blind) hope they are educating enough deaf and blind people so that they aren't getting lost. Minnie was a participant in the project while she was at the Helen Keller Center.

Mrs. Smith explains Minnie's difficulty in communicating, even though she can speak: "Deaf and blind people think in terms of the concrete rather than the abstract as sighted and hearing people do." That's why it's difficult for Minnie to recall, even in her sign language, her feelings about her



impending blindness, and maybe even why she doesn't talk about her life when she still could see.

Minnie developed her own way of communicating by which someone writes letters with his fingers on her arm. Minnie could recognize the spelling of words by the shape of the letters as they were traced on her arm.

"This showed us that she was an intelligent person," Mrs. Smith says. "Often we only have to write part of a word and she already knows what we are trying to say."

Sometimes, when she's asked questions Minnie still says, "I can't see. I can't hear." But she apparently is happy. She looks forward to company and likes to show off what she has made.

"I'm glad you came to see me," she says in the guttural voice peculiar to the deaf, as she lovingly drapes a handwoven scarf around Mrs. Smith's neck. Minnie made the scarf while she was in New York.

"That place was full of crazy people," Minnie says. Mrs. Smith explains that

Minnie describes something as being crazy when she likes it.

Minnie seems to love everybody, and is never judgmental of anyone. She can't see their faces; instead, she has learned to recognize inner beauty better than any sighted person ever could.

### DON'T TAKE THIS WORLD'S BEAUTY FOR GRANTED

(This article was also written by Ms. Linda Hembree and was published by the Spartanburg, N.C. Herald-Journal as a companion piece to the story of Minnie Forister.)

How much beauty is there in leaves,  
patchworking the sky in golds and reds?

I never really noticed. I never really  
cared.

How much beauty is there in the singing  
of birds, or soft breezes rippling through  
the trees?

I never really listened. It really  
didn't matter.

But, driving 1-26 from Clinton to Spartanburg last week, I looked, maybe for the first time, at the colors of the leaves as they formed a palette against the horizon. I listened to the sounds around me and, maybe for the first time, really heard them.

After spending the morning blindfolded, trying to learn how it feels to be sightless, I began to notice the world around me in ways I never had before.

Being "blind" temporarily certainly isn't the same as knowing you will never see the light of day again, but it makes you appreciate so much that you take for granted—like riding down the road, and at least knowing which way you're going.

My period of "blindness" was very limited, but I did ride in a car, walk from the car to a restaurant, eat a meal, pay for it, and return to the car—all without the use of my eyes.

It's not as easy as it might seem.

I blindfolded myself after I got into the car at Whitten Center with Lynda Smith



of the South Carolina Commission for the Blind. I knew she was taking me to lunch, but I didn't know where. It was difficult for me to feel the car moving and not know which way I was going. Also, since I usually drive, it was difficult to accept that I was at the mercy of someone else and always would be if I really were blind.

Walking from the car to the restaurant was a little scary. It couldn't have been far, but it seemed like miles. Stepping up just a few inches was like stepping up a mountain, and although I knew I was on level ground, for some reason I was constantly afraid I was going to fall.

I had to hold on to Lynda's arm. I just assumed she wouldn't lead me through heavy traffic or off the side of a cliff. I guess blind people wonder that sometimes, too, when they have to put themselves at the mercy of someone else.

As we walked, I found myself carefully putting one foot in front of the other as though the ground might move out from under

me. If I was left standing alone, without anything in touching distance, I began to lose my balance.

Once inside, eating was another matter. I had to tell Lynda what I wanted and she ordered for me. Since I could hear her, I believed I would get my preference.

Eating without being able to see what I was doing was not as difficult as I had anticipated. Once I knew where my food was (I've always been well aware of the location of my mouth), maneuvering was fairly easy. But, I admit, I was eating a hamburger. If I had had to bother with cutting meat, and knowing I was getting peas on my fork when I really wanted carrots, it probably would have been much more frustrating.

As we ate, we talked. Suddenly I realized that I was having difficulty concentrating on what Lynda was saying. It wasn't because I wasn't listening. It was just harder for me to hear when I couldn't see. Evidently, I depend on my eyes for a lot more than I had realized.

Still, I could talk with her while we ate. What if, besides being blind, I couldn't hear?

Trying to pay for my meal was an interesting experience. I knew I had a \$5 bill and two \$1 bills in my pocket, as well as some change—all nickels, dimes and quarters. My task was to give Lynda \$2.31.

I thought it probably wouldn't be impossible to tell the difference between a nickel, a dime and a quarter just by feeling their size, but how was I to tell the difference between a \$5 bill and a \$1 bill? I had to trust Lynda to tell me if I gave her the wrong bill.

Of course, I knew she wasn't going to cheat me, but I could understand how a blind person might feel when giving money to a store clerk. How would he ever know if he was cheated?

When I tried to decide which bills to give Lynda, I had an advantage, or at least I thought I did. I remembered, or hoped I remembered, folding the money with the \$5



on the inside. That meant the two \$1 bills were on the outside. Luckily, I was right. Also, I could feel a quarter and a dime to give her 35 cents.

Lynda asked me how I knew I had given her the right bills and I told her what I had remembered. She then showed me (by letting me feel) how blind people often fold their money so they can distinguish one denomination from another. But it occurred to me still that they had to trust someone to tell them the denominations in the first place.

Learning to trust someone that way would be difficult for me—and I'll have to admit that I looked in my pocket on the way home to be sure I really still had my \$5.

The morning's experience, after just interviewing a woman without sight and hearing, affected me profoundly.

I guess I've always taken life for granted. I say "life" instead of "sight" because without sight, there is so much of life to miss: the golden sunsets, the colorful leaves, the wagging tail of a playful puppy,

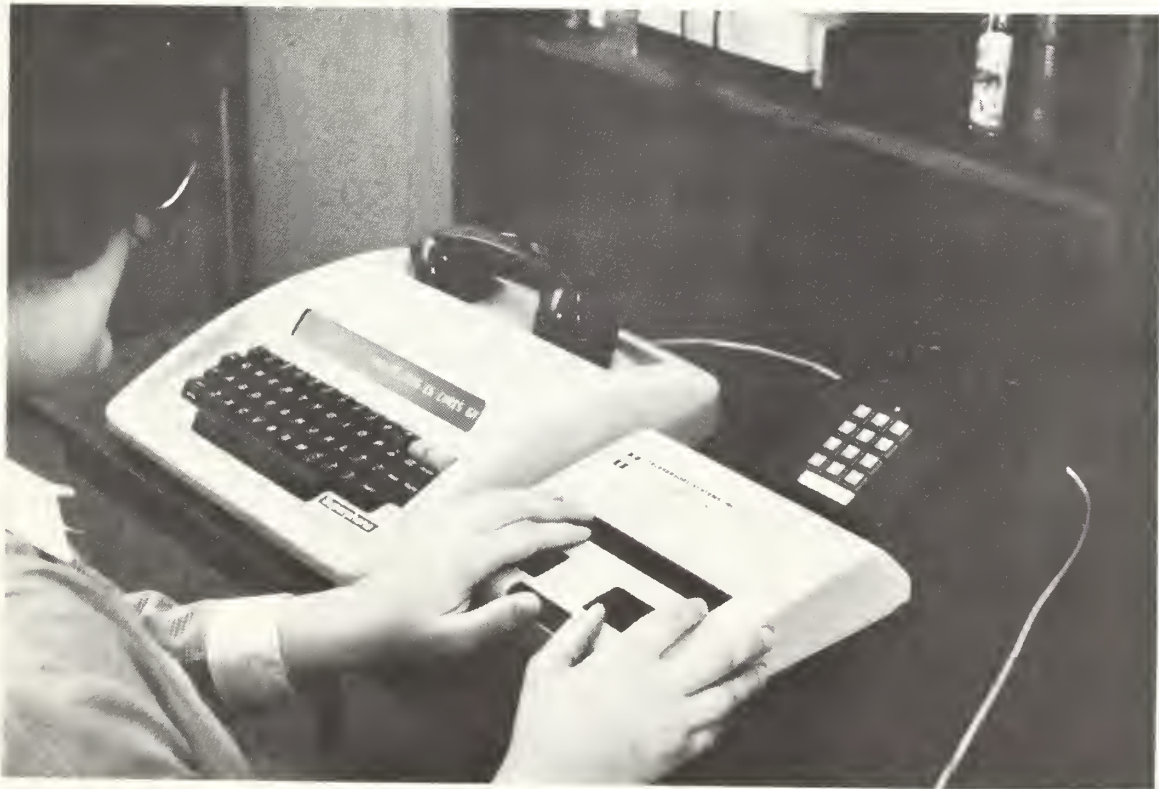
the beauty of a rosebud, and, most of all, the face of a friend.

## REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNICATION AID ANNOUNCED

Telesensory Systems, Inc., has announced the manufacture of TeleBraille, a revolutionary communication system which could provide a key to independence for thousands of deaf-blind people in the United States. The original prototype of TeleBraille was invented at the Helen Keller National Center for Deaf-Blind Youths and Adults. The TSI TeleBraille was developed by Telesensory Systems under sponsorship of a grant from the National Institute of Health.

In face-to-face communication, a deaf-blind person who knows braille can learn to operate the TeleBraille in a few minutes. The deaf-blind person "talks" by keying in his message on a braille keyboard, and "listens" by reading a braille display consisting of several rows of pins that are raised and lowered to display a line of 20 cells in braille. A sighted person "talks" by keying

in a message on a typewriter keyboard built into a second unit connected by a cable to the braille unit. This second unit also contains a 32-character visual display and a telephone acoustic coupler. Information from either keyboard appears simultaneously on the visual and braille displays. The entire TeleBraille system is portable and battery-operated.



The TeleBraille can also be used for communication over the telephone. In this mode of operation, the telephone handset is placed on the acoustic coupler so that when the typewriter keyboard or braille keyboard are



used, tones designating each letter are sent over the telephone wires.

The TeleBraille automatically translates braille to either five-level or eight-level alphabet-numeric codes. Any telecommunication devices (TTY or RDD) for the deaf, or computer terminal at the other end of the telephone line can receive the message and display it visually. Correspondingly, messages sent over the telephone line to the TeleBraille system from TDD's or computer terminal sources will be displayed in braille. This telephone communication is extremely important because it enables a deaf-blind person to have access to emergency services as well as to communicate with friends or relatives.

The enthusiastic response of deaf-blind people using the TeleBraille during the research and evaluation period led to TSI's decision to initiate production. First units are planned to be shipped this summer. The price will be \$5500.00.

Because of the high cost of the Tele-

Braille system relative to the average income of most deaf-blind people, the American Association of the Deaf-Blind (AADB) is approaching foundations, agencies serving the deaf-blind, and telephone companies to obtain support for TeleBraille training and subsidy programs. Inquiries and orders should be sent to: American Association of the Deaf-Blind, 805 Easley St., Silver Spring, Maryland 20901.

#### NOTICE

The Helen Keller National Center now has available for distribution a supply of alphabet cards which display both the print and braille alphabet, and which can be used for communication with deaf-blind persons. These cards are made of flexible, durable plastic and can easily be carried in pocket or purse.

Cards will be sold at twenty-five cents each, plus postage if ordered in quantity. Requests for cards should be sent to: Community Education Dept., Helen Keller National Center, 111 Middle Neck Road, Sands Point, NY 11050.



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## EDITORIAL

### REACHING OUT!

By Robert J. Smithdas, L.H.D., Litt.D.

For most people, using a telephone is a commonplace, everyday experience that they take for granted. They use the telephone for making personal contact with friends, for business and obtaining information, and for calling for assistance in case of emergencies. During the past decade, telecommunication has expanded to include the sighted-deaf, who—using special telephone devices—are now able to reap many of the same benefits.

And now it appears that modern science and technology are on the verge of opening up a whole new world of communication for the deaf-blind.

The recent advent of TeleBraille, a paperless braille device developed by Tele-sensory Systems, Inc., (TSI) of Mountainview, California, is a remarkable achievement. Not only can TeleBraille be used for communication over telephone lines, but it can also be

used as a face-to-face device that makes it possible for a stranger who does not know how to communicate with a deaf-blind person to type out messages which can be read in braille. With equal ease, a deaf-blind person—even if speech is absent—can write out a message on the device's braille keyboard which can be read by the sighted person on a printout panel in clear, legible letters. In addition, it would be possible to use this face-to-face capability at conferences and meetings, where a typist or secretary could type out the proceedings and the deaf-blind participant could read the information in braille.

TeleBraille is able to access all the services currently available to the sighted-deaf, including emergency resources such as police, fire departments, and hospital services that maintain TTY-TDD setups. This writer has used it to obtain information from airlines, stockbrokers, certain government agencies, and Sears Roebuck, the giant mail-order house.

Currently there are at least two other devices available for telecommunication by the deaf-blind—Triformation's Micro-Brailler, which must be adapted for telephone use; and an adapted TTY machine developed by Lee Brody, which uses a large spool of paper tape. But TeleBraille is outstanding because of its flexibility and versatility, and the ease of learning to use it. As a measure of its outstanding qualities, Pacific Bell Telephone is currently planning to purchase and distribute TeleBraille devices to deaf-blind residents of California, where a state law provides that special telephone devices must be made available to the handicapped.

TeleBraille is another milestone in the search for independent living for the deaf-blind.

### THE DIRECTOR'S CORNER

By Martin A. Adler, MSW, ACSW

About two years ago, at an AADB Convention, several deaf-blind individuals were discussing the lack of national recognition



for deaf-blind individuals. One deaf-blind person expressed the hope that perhaps one day might be set aside to honor deaf-blind persons. That request was finally accomplished on June 18, 1984 when President Ronald Reagan signed into law Public Law 98-320, which created the Helen Keller Deaf-Blind Awareness Week starting June 24, 1984. The general purpose of this law was to honor all deaf-blind persons and express to them the nation's recognition of their abilities, their courage, and the important place they hold as American citizens.

Our goal in developing the resolution to honor deaf-blind individuals was to bring to the nation's attention the struggles and successes of our deaf-blind citizens, their pride and courage, and their participation in all aspects of American life. We think that that goal has been achieved. 218 members of the House of Representatives co-sponsored the bill; 35 Senators co-sponsored the bill in the Senate; and many governors and mayors proclaimed the week of June 24, 1984 as Helen

Keller Deaf-Blind Awareness Week. Thousands of people across the country became more aware of their deaf-blind neighbors. Hundreds of employers, personnel managers, and affirmative action officers also became aware of the abilities of deaf-blind persons and their potential for productive employment.



Mr. Martin Adler, Director of HKNC, presents a scroll to the Honorable Robert J. Mrazek in recognition of his role in the creation of "Helen Keller Deaf-Blind Awareness Week."

Mr. Richard Ramm (at microphone) speaks of his experiences as a client at HKNC. In background (l. to r.) are RSA Commissioner George A. Conn; State Assemblywoman May W. Newburger; Congressman Robert J. Mrazek; Attorney Ronald Friedman; Interpreter Diane Goldberg; and Mr. Edwin J. Vetog, President of The Industrial Home for the Blind.



A very moving ceremony honoring deaf-blind persons was held at HKNC headquarters on Sunday, June 24th. Proclamations by the Governor of the State of New York, Mayor of New York City, New York State Assembly and Senate, and local, county, and town officials highlighted the ceremonies. Speeches by Congressman Robert Mrazek and RSA Commissioner George A. Conn added to the ceremonies, but the highlights were comments expressed by two former HKNC clients who are now volunteers at the Center, Agatha Pike and Richard Ramm, and participation of members of our singing and signing choir. Toward the end of the ceremonies, over 150 guests gave a standing ovation in honor of all deaf-blind persons.

It is our hope that the Helen Keller Deaf-Blind Awareness Week will be an annual event and thereby will assist more deaf-blind individuals to reach their maximum level of participation within American society.



## NINTH ANNUAL AADB CONVENTION

The ninth annual national open convention of the American Association of the Deaf-Blind, held in Seattle, Washington, during the week of June 30-July 1, 1984, was the largest and most successful convention of the AADB to date. Attended by 176 deaf-blind persons from the United States and Canada, and approximately 225 volunteer interpreter/guides, the entire week was filled with activities—meetings, recreation, and tours.

Hosted by the Washington State Deaf-Blind Citizens and held on the beautiful campus of the University of Washington, the theme of the convention was "Community." Workshops focused on community development and relationships, and the needs of the deaf-blind for building a strong community image. The host committee worked on preparations for the week-long meeting for more than a year, and its two co-chairmen, Dan Mansfield and Don Meyer (deaf-blind), deserve praise for an exceptionally well-organized, successful event.

The climax of the convention was the awards banquet, held on Saturday, June 30. Robert L. Miller, now retired, was recipient of the Peter J. Salmon Award for outstanding service to the deaf-blind, more than thirty years of devoted service to the deaf-blind of the West Coast. Mrs. Aslaug Haviland, of Salt Lake City, Utah, received the Laura D. Bridgman Award for exceptional achievements as a deaf-blind person.

In 1982 the Washington State Deaf-Blind Citizens was incorporated as an organization. It has elected officers, and each deaf-blind person has an interpreter. Activity schedules are mailed to members and associate members. The organization has representation on many state committees, including a special task force in Seattle for expanding and improving services for the deaf-blind.

Tentative plans are for the next AADB convention to be held in New Jersey during the week of June 23-30, 1985.

## TUNNEL VISION

By Emily McDonald

Staff Writer, The Chattanooga Times

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Sharon Johnson at the  
Helen Keller National  
Center, April, 1984.

Sharon Johnson is not blind. She is quick to point out how her Usher's Syndrome differs from blindness.

"Usher's Syndrome is tunnel vision, and I have night vision problems. A blind person can't see anything. I see fine during the day, but I use a cane to help me in places. My peripheral vision is gone." Miss Johnson spoke in visual sign language, and her comments were interpreted by Kathy Lutes.



Miss Johnson has lived with degenerating vision since her teen-age years, but she has lived with deafness since birth. She found it difficult to accept that her eyesight was in jeopardy, and only recently has she come to grips with the reality of her dual handicap. "When I went to the Helen Keller Center, I accepted it. I had a lot of problems, but they are gone now," she said.

Miss Johnson recently returned from an eight-month stay at the Helen Keller Center for Deaf-Blind Youths and Adults in Sands Point, N.Y. The national center provides comprehensive rehabilitation for deaf-blind persons.

Miss Johnson participated in the Siskin Memorial Foundation's program in Chattanooga as a child, and she attended the Central Institute for the Deaf in St. Louis, Mo. She was graduated from the Tennessee School for the Deaf in Knoxville in 1971, and received an associate degree in secretarial studies from Delgado State College in New Orleans.

Miss Johnson went to work as a bindery

clerk at Provident Life and Accident Insurance Co., but her loss of vision began to endanger her safety. She was moved to a different department and learned to operate a computer terminal with the help of a special low-vision magnifying device, Visualtek. The vision problems continued, however, and Miss Johnson realized she needed the training that the Helen Keller Center could provide. She left Provident after eight years.

She was referred to the Helen Keller Center by the Tennessee State Division of Services for the Blind, which evaluated her medical and vocational situation.

"Because I had low vision, I had to have things for home management, daily living skills, Braille and other things," Miss Johnson said. She also needed to delve into job exploration. She was evaluated at the center to determine exactly what skills she had and what skills were needed. Then she moved into the training program.

One of the most important things she learned was mobility. She began to use a

cane so she wouldn't have to depend on a sighted guide.

Miss Johnson had communicated in visual sign language, American Sign Language, all her life, but she was trained in the hand-over-hand technique of tactile signing. "They turned the lights off, and closed the windowshades. We had to learn it," she said. Miss Johnson uses visual language in the daytime, and tactile signing at night.

Her home management training at the center stressed the tactile approach in more than language. Ordinary tasks such as cooking and housecleaning, were taught with safety and efficiency in mind.

Miss Johnson learned to use a special alarm clock that is placed under a pillow or mattress and vibrates to awaken her. She learned to differentiate between the denominations of paper money and to label her clothes with Braille tags.

She also learned to use a tactile speech indicator, a device attached to a telephone headset. It amplifies sound and converts it



into vibrations felt on a small receiver unit. She also learned to use a tactile communicator, a radio paging system. The device, made of a pocket-size receiver and a radio-size transmitter, uses vibrations to transmit information about doorbell and telephone rings, fire alarms, smoke detector sounds and other household information. "I am ready to get one, if I can get somebody to fix the wires for me," she said.

The curriculum at the Helen Keller Center also included Braille writing, reading, math, English and budgeting. Miss Johnson gained work experience in the center's clerical and accounting departments, as a teacher's aide in the pre-vocational area and at a local Methodist church.

Now that her stay at the center is over, Miss Johnson said, "I'm going to rest for a while. Then I will be ready to look for a job." She hasn't decided what type of job she wants, but she hopes to find employment in Chattanooga. But if she finds no work here, she would move elsewhere.

Once she obtains and gets settled in a job, Miss Johnson wants to get her own apartment. Until that time she is living with her mother, Jody Johnson.

And she will be telling her story to others with Usher's Syndrome.

"I want to let people know about the Helen Keller Center, and I want to let people with Usher's syndrome know that they can have a good life," she said.

Despite her dual handicap, Sharon Johnson has learned to function independently, and she hopes to serve as an example to others with similar problems.

## FIELD NOTES

By Dean Wyrick, M.S., C.R.C.

National Field Services Coordinator

There have been several recent changes in the Field Services Department at the Helen Keller National Center, including a new regional office, and two new regional representatives.



Mr. David L. Bennett

First, the new regional office we had planned to open last March became a reality August 1, 1984, when Mr. David L. Bennett started as the Center's Great Plains regional representative. His office, located at

324 E. 11th St., Suite 2310, Kansas City, MO 64106 (telephone: 816-474-8299) will have the same service area as Region VII of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA). This includes Nebraska and Kansas, previously served by the Center's Denver office, and Iowa and Missouri, which were formerly served by the North Central office in Chicago. Mr. Bennett has more than 20 years experience in the human services field, including teaching, counseling, and coordinating and directing a broad range of evaluation and training programs for the blind and deaf-blind.

Mr. Bennett holds a bachelor of Arts



degree in philosophy from Gettysburg College, and a Master of Education degree from Temple University. He is skilled in sign language for the deaf, and holds professional teaching certificates for the blind in Florida and Pennsylvania.

A new regional representative has also been selected for the Center's regional office in Philadelphia since Margaret Davies announced her retirement. Ms. Elizabeth Bixler, who started August 1, 1984, is the regional representative for the Center's East-Central office, which now includes Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia. Ohio, previously served by the Philadelphia office, will now be served by Dr. William Goodman, the Center's representative in the Chicago office.

Ms. Bixler has more than six years of experience in teaching the blind and deaf-blind. She earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in elementary education at W.Va. Wesleyan College, and holds a Master of Education

degree in special education of the deaf-blind and multi-handicapped from Boston College. She is skilled in sign language and holds professional teaching certificates for the hearing impaired in Delaware and West Virginia.



Ms. Elizabeth Bixler

In the southeast, Dean Ericson, the Center's regional representative in Atlanta, has announced plans to enter the Counseling Psychology Doctoral program at Georgia State University in September. This will require his full-time attention to college studies. At this writing, a new regional representative has not yet been selected as a replacement. Mr. Ericson has represented the Center for more than four years, and during this time his work had a tremendous impact toward improved services for the deaf-blind, particularly in developing multi-agency agreements to assure proper services could be provided.

In the northeast, Mr. Louis Anderson,

the Center's regional representative in Seattle, joined with Ms. Melissa Shapiro, the Center's audiologist, in presenting a paper at Nashville, Tennessee, at the AAWB/AEVH conference, dealing with "The Rehabilitation Implications of Usher's Syndrome Type II Clients." This paper, a thorough review of literature and case history studies, is a landmark contribution to the knowledge of deaf-blindness, and focuses on the very special needs and rehabilitation implications of this often overlooked population group.

Finally, this writer will be leaving the Helen Keller National Center effective September 30, 1984. The growth of the Center and its tremendous program development, both at its headquarters in New York and in the field, make it increasingly necessary that the position of coordinator of field services be performed at headquarters. My decision not to move to New York was a difficult one, but personal and family reasons require me to remain in Dallas. Beginning in October, Mr. Jules Côté, associate director, will begin





Mr. Dean Wyrick

supervising the Center's field services. As I complete my final Field Notes column, I am pleased to have had a part in the development of the Center's field services over the past decade. When I began working for the Center in October, 1974, as its

south central regional representative, it was to establish our fifth regional office. A year later, as national field services coordinator, I assumed responsibility for the Center's field services department and affiliation program. Starting with only one affiliate project in 1975, I developed an average of three new projects yearly until Mr. Steve Barrett assumed responsibility for the affiliate program three years ago.

What are my plans after September? I am

ot yet certain, but I feel that God is already preparing my path, and I look forward to it with great anticipation. As my season with the Helen Keller National Center approaches sunset, I am reminded of Helen Keller who said: "Keep your face to the sunshine and you cannot see the shadow."

## ROBERT SMITHDAS RECEIVES REGENTS MEDAL OF EXCELLENCE



At a midday ceremony at the Human Resources Center in Albertson, N.Y., on July 18, 1984, Dr. Robert J. Smithdas was awarded a medal of excellence by the Board of Regents of the University of the State of New York. The award was made for "outstanding contributions on behalf of disabled individuals."

Gordon M. Ambach, Commissioner of Education (left) congratulating Robert J. Smithdas, Director of Community Education, HKNC, Regents Medalist.

During the celebration entitled "New York: Commitment to the Disabled," Dr. Smithdas read the title poem from his book "Shared Beauty." For those readers who may not be familiar with the poem, it is reprinted here.

### SHARED BEAUTY

I cannot see a rainbow's glory spread  
across a rain-washed sky when storm is over;  
nor can I see or hear the birds that cry  
their songs among the clouds, or through  
bright clover.

You tell me that the night is full of stars,  
and how the winds and waters sing and flow;  
and in my heart I wish that I could share  
with you this beauty that I cannot know.

I only know that when I touch a flower,  
or feel the sun and wind upon my face,  
or hold your hand in mine, there is a  
brightness

within my soul that words can never trace.  
I call it Life, and laugh with its delight,  
though life itself be out of sound and sight.



## BRIDGING THE INFORMATION GAP

Under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education's Special Education Programs, through the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, the National Deaf-Blind Information and Resource Center (NDBIRC) has a funded mandate to develop a registry of deaf-blind children, and to serve as a resource center for programs of education of deaf-blind children. While this project has been of immense help to other service providers, including the Helen Keller National Center, its focus has been primarily aimed at special education programs.

Now an agreement which stipulates a formal cooperative effort between the HKNC and NDBIRC has as its purpose the expansion of information and resources available to workers serving the deaf-blind. This project will be national in scope and will center upon NDBIRC serving as a resource center for HKNC, its affiliate network, the Center's regional offices, and workers in the field

of services to deaf-blind people.

The overall project has the following goals: (1) To expand NDBIRC's resource center by adding the library resources of the HKNC; (2) To make accessible data banks for computerized bibliography searches of literature and research for deaf-blindness; (3) To develop a "deaf-blind bulletin board" with listings of current events and newsworthy items related to deaf-blindness; (4) To develop a computerized model for a case management system to support deaf-blind projects in vocational rehabilitation settings.

NDBIRC will also serve as a resource to the HKNC in possibly exploring new uses of computers in establishing management information systems.

BEFORE AIDING THE DEAF AND BLIND,  
CLINIC MUST FIND THEM

By Russ Robinson

© 1984, The Baltimore Sun

Westminster—In one moment there was light and laughter and in the next instant there was

darkness and silence—and with it came fear, loneliness and frustration.

Within a few minutes, I had stumbled over chairs and into other people, stuck my hand in a bowlful of butter, tried to spread a grape on a roll and poured water into someone else's glass.

I couldn't find my food, couldn't tell what was going on around me and had to depend on someone else to lead me wherever I went. Ten minutes into the short-lived experiment, I wanted to rip the blindfold off and say I'd had enough.

"Can you imagine doing that every day of your life?" asked Janice Adams, a counselor at the Laurel Mental Health Center. "You have problems cooking, cleaning, communicating, getting a job."

Mrs. Adams understands those problems. She is deaf and blind. She was one of a group of deaf/blind persons who attended a dinner at Western Maryland College last week to thank local Lions Clubs and Kiwanis Clubs for donations that support special programs



for the handicapped at the college.

The dinner guests were blindfolded as they entered and told not to speak in an effort to help them understand what life is like for a person with both handicaps. Cut off from sight and sound, simple tasks become ordeals. Routine communication becomes impossible.

Helen Keller's story in the book and movie "The Miracle Worker" brought the plight of the person with the dual handicaps before the public. But even today less than 10 percent of the estimated 20,000 to 40,000 deaf and blind persons in the United States have been identified by agencies that are supposed to help them, said Dr. McCay Vernon, a Western Maryland psychologist who works with those unable to hear or see.

"They are locked away in attics and mental institutions and back rooms around this country," Dr. Vernon said. "They can't communicate their needs, so they are ignored."

Western Maryland has the only graduate program in the world that teaches profession-

als to work with adults with both handicaps, said Dr. Brian Finlay, the program's coordinator.

The deaf/blind program is funded solely by donations from such service clubs as the Kiwanis and Lions, and from grants like the one from the R.J. Reynolds Foundation, which this year gave the college \$248,000.

There are more adults who can't hear or see today than ever before as victims of the 1963-1965 Rubella measles epidemic mature, Dr. Vernon said. And there are few services for those young adults, he said, because they are so easy to ignore.

Most of the Rubella children were born both deaf and blind. Other victims are children who are born deaf and slowly go blind from a genetic disease called Usher's Syndrome.

That's the disease that left Mrs. Adams, of Laurel, deaf and blind and that within a few years will rob Rod Visser of his sight, casting him into a world of silence and darkness. By the time that happens, Mr. Visser,

of Westminster, hopes to have completed his study at Western Maryland and be ready to help others deal with similar handicaps.

And dealing with it is the hardest part.

"When I was first diagnosed, my parents didn't inform me," Mrs. Adams said, speaking sign language through an interpreter. "They told me that everything would be all right. We went from doctor to doctor hoping someone would tell us there was a cure. But there wasn't one.

"It was very hard for my parents. But they have coped," she said. "Now they are very proud of what I have accomplished."

"It requires a lot of patience on my part," Mrs. Adams said. "Sometimes you want to give up, but you don't. You cope."

Because Usher's Syndrome is a genetic disease, some parents blame themselves, Mr. Visser said. When it hits more than one child in a family, the problem is compounded.

"I found out when I was 17 that I was losing my sight," he said through an interpreter. "Now I'm 25 and it's still deteri-



orating. I have a sister with Usher's. She's 22 years old. I have another deaf brother. I don't know if he has Usher's. I haven't asked him if he's losing his sight.

"It's difficult living with Usher's. It's difficult to talk to my parents about my world," he said. Mr. Visser still can see and can read sign language, but when he becomes totally blind, like Mrs. Adams, he will have to communicate by feeling the hands of a person talking to him with sign language.

Given a chance, persons who can't hear or see can become independent, work and take care of themselves, Mrs. Adams and Mr. Visser said. But both said deaf and blind persons needed more opportunities to learn.

Despite their double handicap, deaf/blind people rarely commit suicide, Dr. Vernon said, even when they are born deaf and start losing their vision as teenagers and know they will face life in a world of silence and darkness.

"I did research on 6,000 deaf/blind people, and there was not one case of suicide (among

those studied)," he said. "A lot said they had thought about it, but not one of them did it."

"Why? Nobody really knows. I guess if you are deaf/blind and you are there with it 18 hours a day with no stimulation, you do a lot of thinking. There isn't much else to do, and it drives a person to think about the real issues of life (both philosophical and religious)" he said.

It's difficult discussing those issues with persons who have both handicaps because many have a limited sign-language vocabulary and most are poorly educated, he said.

"We're not taking care of these people because they can't articulate their needs," Dr. Vernon said.

### COMMUNICATION: KEY TO COMMUNITY

By Michelle Smithdas, Ass't Instructor, HKNC  
(Presented at the Ninth Annual Convention  
of the American Assoc. of the Deaf-Blind)

Communication is a topic which requires much thought to understand its true meaning.

To start with, we need to understand how communication begins. Different thoughts and feelings run through our minds, and putting these together, we come up with ideas and ways of making them known to others. These can be ideas, wants, needs, or desires that we feel we must express. Communication is a process through which we exchange information with others by using signs, symbols, speech, or behavior that can be understood. We can see this exchange of information, using different methods, among the deaf-blind people who are gathered here this week. We should also understand the meaning of community. Perhaps the simplest way to define community is to say that people living in a common culture, and having common interests, depend on each other for their needs and to solve problems. We do need ways to communicate with each other directly or indirectly, but we also need ways for the community to communicate with us. This is very important for deaf-blind people. If we are to live successfully and happily within the community, we must



know the different forms of communication so that barriers can easily be overcome.

There are several forms of communication used by the deaf-blind today. We should know what they are and how they can be used. The more we know about these methods of communication, the more confidence we will have in adjusting to community living. Let's take a quick look at them and find out how many we know.

Fingerspelling: a system of forming letters with different finger and knuckle positions of the hand.

Sign language: a system of hand movements in which different movements signify words or ideas.

Print-on-palm: the printing of large block letters, one at a time, on the palm of the hand to spell out words.

Tellatouch: a small machine that has a typing keyboard and a braille keyboard which punch up dots to form braille characters on the other side of the machine, used by those who know braille.

Lip reading: a system of watching a speaker's lips as they form words, either visually or tactually.

Alphabet cards: cards printed with the alphabet, with corresponding braille characters embossed under each print letter, and one's finger is placed on each braille character to spell out words.

Alphabet plate: a hard plastic or metal plate embossed with raised letters of the alphabet, and one's finger is placed on each letter to spell out words.

Alphabet glove: a glove having the letters of the alphabet printed in different positions, known to the deaf-blind person, on which words are spelled out by touching each letter.

Braille reading and writing: using a slate and stylus or a braille machine to send and receive messages.

Braille TTY: a machine with which a deaf-blind person can send messages over the telephone to another person who has a similar device, and receive messages in braille.

Tactile Speech Indicator (TSI): a small device with a vibrating fingerplate, with which a deaf-blind person who has speech can communicate with hearing persons and receive their replies according to an agreed code-- it can be used for sending Morse code.

Morse code: a system of dots and dashes which can be tapped out, with different arrangements for each letter of the alphabet.

Optacon: a device with a small camera that glides along a printed line, and the reader feels the image of each letter as it vibrates under the finger, which is placed in a groove.

Computers: the newest paperless braille devices, such as TeleBraille and the Micro-Brailler, which can be used for telephone communication and which have lines of braille cells.

Tactile Communicator: a small device with a transmitter and a receiver that vibrates according to a set code of signals, giving different cues, such as a doorbell ringing, telephone ringing, fire and burglar



alarms, and even a timer and call button to call a deaf or deaf-blind person when needed.

One wonders where they can learn all these methods of communication. One good place is the Helen Keller National Center, located in Sands Point, New York. Another place is the Hadley School for the Blind, in Winnetka, Illinois; and there are many rehabilitation centers and agencies for the blind and deaf who also know about these methods of communication.

Now that we have knowledge about communication, we want to put these ideas to use. This brings us to the concept of community living.

All of us, at times, have been faced by the bewildering question of how to cope and be a part of community life. I can remember becoming deaf-blind and wondering how I could function and what was happening around me. What can we do to be successful in a community? We need knowledge of the many methods of communication so that we can express our

wants, needs, desires, and ideas to others. Knowing various methods of communication enables one to achieve some success in community living; but if we want to be truly successful, we must know how to apply those methods to the best advantage.

When I became deaf-blind, I remember feeling very discouraged because I felt cut off from receiving vital information from others. We may think that the family can supply the necessary information that we need, but that would not be the kind of independence we want to experience. There are times when a family member is not nearby to give us the information that we need. We have to develop an approach that is best for carrying out the art of communication. Some may prefer using Tellatouch rather than print-on-palm; others may prefer using print-on-palm rather than finger-spelling. It is a good idea to have some skill in several methods, because one never knows which method one will have to use.

There are many areas in community living.

At the Helen Keller National Center we have programs to develop community skills. One such program is the Group Home Experience, or GHR for short. There are deaf-blind people who can live independently if they have minimal support from others. An example is a deaf-blind person who cannot handle the role of cooking a big meal. Such people may not feel they have the capability to live on their own.

The Alternate Morning Program is another project. This is designed for deaf-blind people who need constant supervision, but who also need the chance and opportunity to experience different tasks that they can do to keep active and busy.

Another program is the Community Neighborhood Experience, or CNE. This program is basically geared to the Center's mobility department, but the idea is to provide deaf-blind people the joy and experience of going to places in the community they would need or enjoy in their home communities—such as banks, eating-places, laundromats, and many



others. This provides actual experience in using communication and community services.

Another very good program is the Career Awareness Program, which includes experience in competitive work. In CAP, deaf-blind persons learn to experience different career opportunities that are available to them as individuals. It gives them the opportunity to test their skills on different jobs. They learn what it means to work in a community setting.

All these programs provide opportunities to communicate with friendly, helpful people within the community who are not deaf-blind. Knowing the various methods of communication can be very helpful. One young lady who preferred to use sign language could not rely on this method while on work experience at a hospital, so she had to resort to using pencil and paper to communicate with her supervisor. Another young woman found she had to rely on print-on-palm; and a young man, experiencing a career opportunity, did well in communicating with Tellatouch. They used

these methods to fit into different community situations.

And of course, there are deaf-blind individuals who are homemakers, or who are moving into retirement settings. In order for them to be comfortable and happy, they must be able to communicate with their surroundings and the people they meet every day.

Many probably feel that there is no need to put such stress on communication, but there are important reasons for doing so. Let's imagine that I did not know any of the communication methods mentioned earlier. It would be very difficult for me to seek out and ask for help. This could reach a point where I would feel very frustrated and alone.

Now let's say we are ready to step into a community setting. First, I would feel good if I can use three or four methods of communication. Also, I would need to know what the community has to offer to me. Knowing what is available in a community and how to gain access to its services would give me the pleasure of attainment. Communication is

vital to community living.

It is wonderful to be able to explain to someone how they can communicate with us. People do gradually learn and remember how to communicate with deaf-blind individuals. There is a man who comes to the door of my home, who knows that he must print on my palm until he can learn a better method of communication. Each time he comes to the door, he gently reaches for my hand, or my husband's hand, and prints his message. He says that some day soon he will learn finger-spelling.

Today we are fortunate that we have braille TTY's so that we can call our friends or families with the telephone, or call special places in case of emergency. With these devices you can even make reservations with the airlines.

And now we have the TeleBraille and Micro-Brailler, which are more reliable than the old braille TTY's that use tape. And to me, one of the most fabulous devices is the Tactile Communicator, that tells me when the doorbells ring, when the telephone rings,



and lets me call my husband, who is also deaf-blind, when he is in the basement or out in the yard. I can even tell when there is thunder!

Communication can help us play another vital role of which many of us may not be aware. It is not easy to learn the role of self-assertion, but we all have things that we want and decisions we must make, and we must express and communicate them to others. Many people try to do our deciding for us, when we are really capable of doing it ourselves. Many of us may be afraid to say what we think, but we must remember that we are individuals with our own likes and dislikes, and we must express them regardless of what others say.

We all want happiness and independence. Communication can be the key to happy, successful community living. We must learn what is available, and strive for improvement.

Let's all communicate and help each other to live better, and to cope with the community and world in which we live.

## A TRIBUTE TO POTENTIAL OF DEAF-BLIND

By Michael Naidus

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SANDS POINT—Bobbing their heads and snapping their fingers to the strains of music they could not hear, the six persons danced into a packed auditorium, adding a final and personal celebration to a day of tributes to the abilities of deaf-blind individuals.

The residents, members of the Helen Keller National Center's Singing-Signing Choir, closed out the ceremonies, offering what one person in the audience called "the perfect beginning" for National Helen Keller Deaf-Blind Awareness Week. The performance aided the primary objective of the day, which was to leave a lasting memory of the potential of the deaf-blind.

"My training here has had a tremendous impact on my life," said Richard Ramm, a deaf-blind client at the center. "I feel

like a new man with a fresh outlook. Anything is possible."



HKNC clients in a salute to "Helen Keller Deaf-Blind Awareness Week." From l. to r. are William Byrnes, Merline Chambers, John Petro, Roberta Matheny, Mary Anne Roberto (staff), Rebecca Sansone and Steven Merschman.

The center, which was established by Congress in 1967, is the flagship operation of the national effort to work with deaf-blind adults. It receives more than \$4 million in federal funding annually, spending \$3 million at the center while sending the rest to dozens of organizations and facilities around the country.

Helping people who have two handicaps is



"the last breakthrough," said George Conn, commissioner of the federal Rehabilitation Services Administration. "And this is the number one program for them in the world. There's nothing close."

Rep. Robert Mrazek (D-Centerport), whose lobbying resulted in the national proclamation and federal funding for the center, said "Every time I look at my daughter, I think she might have been disabled and know what I'd want for her. I think everyone who's concerned with the funding for these programs ought to put themselves in that position."

Helen Keller Deaf-Blind Awareness Week is designed to encourage public consciousness of the problems and capacities of those who are legally without hearing and sight. It was scheduled for this week to mark the 104th anniversary of Keller's birth, which is June 28th.

But despite the presence of Mrazek and other politicians, it was the residents who took center stage. "I want people to understand how wonderful a place like this is"

said Agatha Pike, a former client of the center who does volunteer work there. "It's a whole new life."

And before dancing their way out of the auditorium, they told the audience exactly how that felt. As their counselors sang the rewritten words to the song "New York, New York," the residents joined them in sign language.

"Start spreading the news. We're working today. We're gaining skills—hey what a thrill, learning a trade. If we can make it here, we'll make it, have no fear. It's up to you, and it's up to us."

### UPDATE AT THE CENTER

By Martin A. Adler, Director, HKNC

A management change in Administration is going to take place in September, 1984. Mr. Jules Côté, Associate Director, will continue as Associate Director but his responsibilities will now focus on all field services within the HKNC national service delivery

system. Mr. Côté will be responsible for the direct supervision of all ten regional representatives. He will also supervise the Affiliated Network System and the National Training Team, which will remain under the coordination of Sr. Bernadette Wynne. This change signifies the importance of our field services within the HKNC service delivery system. It is through the field services that we hope to make a most significant impact on services to improve the lives of deaf-blind citizens.

The National Training Team will be expanding its activities to include technical assistance to state administrators and agencies participating in transitional programs.

Our Affiliated Network System currently consists of 25 agencies in 23 states and greater emphasis will be placed on the expansion of that program.

We fully expect Mr. Côté to demonstrate further innovative leadership in our goals of providing more accessible and meaningful



services to deaf-blind individuals throughout the country.

Ms. Laura Thomas, Supervising Rehabilitation Counselor at headquarters, will assume the title of Supervisor of Direct Services, part of Mr. Côté's former job function.

We have regretfully accepted Mr. Dean Wyrick's resignation as National Field Service's Supervisor. Mr. Wyrick will be known for the many contributions and leadership demonstrated throughout his ten years of service to the deaf-blind within the HKNC system.

## DEAF-BLIND CENTER OPENS

The Texas Commission for the Deaf (TCD) has entered into a new phase of services for deaf-blind multihandicapped individuals. On June 1, TCD entered into contracts with the Deaf Action Center (DAC) in Dallas and the Lighthouse of Houston to provide a community-based living arrangement for deaf-blind multihandicapped Texans over age 18.

The Deaf Action Center has converted four apartments adjacent to DAC to accommodate approximately 10 persons. This program will provide 24-hour care and will integrate the clients into community programs for social, vocational, therapeutic and recreational services to the extent possible. The center began full-scale operation of the program the last week in June.

The Lighthouse of Houston is planning to locate their program in a single-family home and will be able to accept approximately six individuals. This program will utilize other services available from the Lighthouse as well as community services when appropriate for the clients.

Both programs are currently accepting referrals, which can be made directly to the Deaf Action Center in Dallas, telephone 214-521-0407; the Lighthouse of Houston, telephone 713-527-9561; or to the Special Services Program of TCD, telephone 512-475-2492.

## DEAF-BLIND ATHLETE CARRIES OLYMPIC TORCH

Since the first kilometer was run in New York City May 8, the Olympic Torch Relay kindled the spirit, the patriotism and the pride of the entire country during the flame's 82-day journey to Los Angeles.

One of the torch-bearers was Jimmy Gage, a 32-year-old blind and deaf patient at Fairview State Hospital in Costa Mesa, California, who carried the torch in Orange County. Gage was a gold medalist at the International Games for the Handicapped at Baton Rouge, LA, winning the 30-meter wheelchair event.

## ON THE HOME FRONT

Kevin Anderson, deaf-blind employee of HKNC, competing against sighted-hearing runners, carried away a silver medal in a track event sponsored by the Long Island Road Runners Club. Kevin ran 3.1 miles in 19 minutes, 56 seconds, and is considering training for future participation in the International Olympics for the Disabled.





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NAT-CENT NEWS

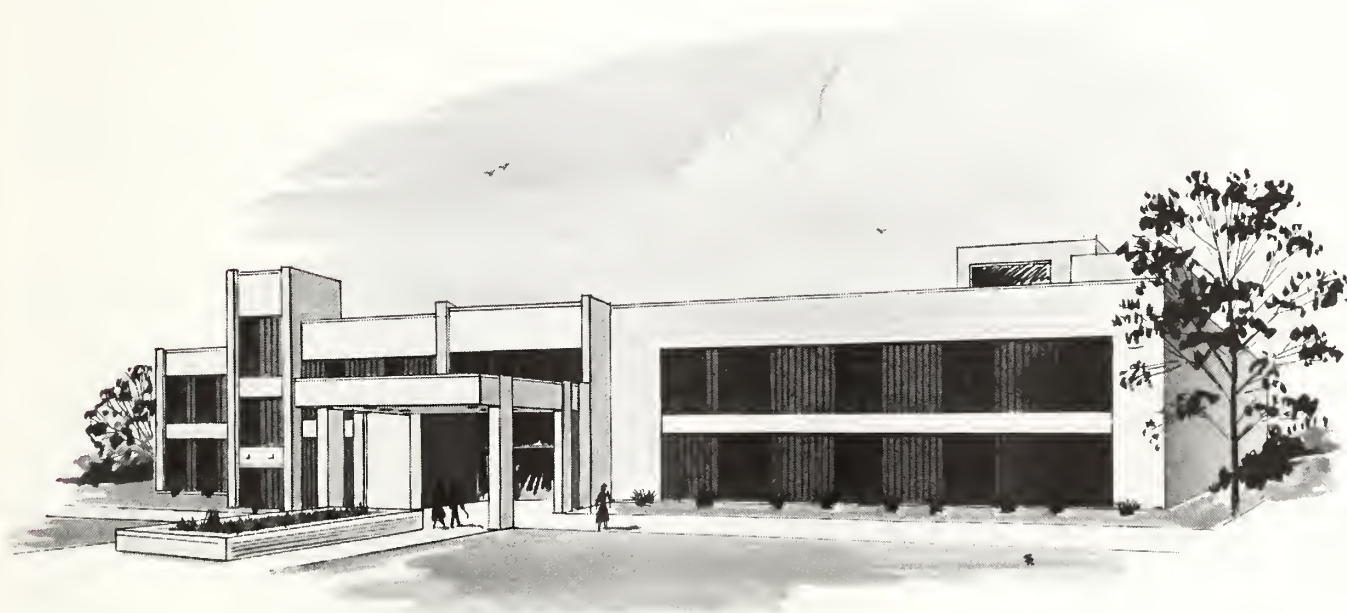
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## EDITORIAL TRANSITION

By Robert J. Smithdas, L.H.D., Litt.D.

One of the most urgent needs in work with the deaf-blind today is a transitional program that will assist the deaf-blind individual to span the gap between education and independent living as a contributing member of adult society. There is a tremendous difference between living within the protective security of an educational system where every activity is carefully planned, and living in the workaday world where one must make personal decisions and choices, solve problems, and contend with the realities of life.

Education can provide knowledge of the tools, methods, and techniques that can be applied to independent living, but does not usually provide realistic situations and experiences where they can be used constructively. The deaf-blind student who has completed schooling invariably finds himself

ruptly facing unfamiliar problems of adjustment to the real world of adulthood where one must compete and use initiative. This is when rehabilitation and training in the skills necessary for everyday independent living should begin.

This problem is also critical for adults who are losing both sight and hearing. They rarely have the information they need to bridge the gap between the sighted-hearing world, to which they are accustomed, and the unfamiliar world of the deaf-blind where they must make radical adjustments. Without an appropriate transitional program to assist them, the challenge is overwhelming and bewildering.

Fortunately, the need to span the transitional gap is being realized, and the Helen Keller National Center is currently developing a program to meet this need. Please see page 16 of this issue of NAT-NT NEWS for further information on this program.



BLIND, DEAF PROF INSPIRES  
STUDENTS, COLLEAGUES

By David Schwab

(Reprinted with permission of the  
SUNDAY STAR-LEDGER, Newark, N.J.)

Once a week, students in Professor Ira Cochin's advanced engineering class at the New Jersey Institute of Technology in Newark go to the blackboard to discuss their homework problems. Cochin, who has gradually become both blind and deaf after teaching for 20 years, sits at the front of the small lecture room with his back to them.

A woman sits facing him, carefully watching and listening to those at the board and gently performing sign language while touching Cochin's large, raised hands.

Kathy Barnitt of Maplewood, a speech specialist, is Cochin's "interpreter," literally his eyes and ears. Using a mixture of sign language and body language, she translates some of the complicated equations and theories and Cochin figures out the rest so

he can discuss the different solutions.

When the assignments are completed, Cochin quickly reviews the Braille copy of the textbook he wrote and walks to the blackboard. He draws a sketch and nonchalantly asks the students to help him position the chalk at the highest point of the curve.

"Am I in the right place?" he asks. They respond by tapping on their desks and he senses the vibrations with his feet through his thin-soled shoes.

Still he apologizes for the drawings and subsequently refers them to the book. "What I'm doing is a blind man's guess," he jokes, as he often does in class.

Depending upon an interpreter as well as his own students and joking with himself are among the simpler techniques the 59-year-old Fair Lawn resident has learned to overcome handicaps that he twice thought had ruined his career and life.

Through a combination of stubborn determination, a little humor and eight years of detailed scientific research, Cochin has

conquered his disabilities to the fullest extent possible.



Ira Cochin (left) and Robert Smithdas, deaf-blind editor of Nat-Cent News, talk with one another using the Tadoma method of lip-reading through vibration.

Though few, if any, with similar disabilities could hope to accomplish as much, Cochin proves what disabled persons can accomplish with some special training, according to the Helen Keller National Center on Long Island.

Cochin, for one, noticed problems with his vision long ago, but it was not until the summer of 1971 that he became blind. Similarly, his hearing began slowly to



diminish, and about one and a half years ago he could not even hear the burglar alarm in his own home.

Doctors have been unable to determine what caused these medical problems, though Cochin believes it may have been related to a case of scarlet fever he had as a youngster.

Once he determined to overcome these obstacles, Cochin developed a series of unusual teaching and research techniques. He transcribed his books, notes and graphs into 17 volumes and studied the few communications methods available to the handicapped.

He mastered the use of a small machine he carries by his side that uses beams of light to translate complicated graphs into pulses he can detect with his finger and later decipher with his mind.

He has become one of only 13 persons in the country to master the technique known as Tadoma, in which he can read lips with his sensitive fingers.

Also, at the Long Island center, he experimented with a conventional device called

a "vibro-tac." Normally, this instrument can permit a deaf person to detect five simple messages such as yes, no or repeat by recording vibrations from the spoken word and transmitting them to a person's arm. But Cochin developed a technique that enables him to decode a number of the sounds and rhythms that make up words.

During these years Cochin has also written two textbooks and created a special laboratory at NJIT for handicapped researchers. He is even experimenting with ways to grow hair on his arms and hands to help him feel air currents that would disclose where walls are located.

Not content with this, he has also studied creative writing and is trying to have published four novels, two on science fiction and two about the problems of the handicapped.

"I have had a healthy attitude in coping with my handicaps and I want to tell people about it," he said.

When he first realized he was becoming blind, Cochin believed his career was

finished, especially because unlike such fields as psychology or history, teaching mechanical engineering depends not simply upon the discussion of ideas but the examination of complicated graphs.

"I thought my life was over," he recalled the other day in his Newark office.

Instead, the school's mechanical engineering department suggested he hire an assistant and convinced him to continue. The first year he discovered he could depend upon his students for help and later was named teacher of the year.

Tackling the loss of hearing he knew would be much more difficult because Cochin, like many blind persons, came to depend upon his acute sense of hearing. So when the inevitable occurred and he became deaf, again he thought he was finished. And again he turned out to be wrong.

NJIT administrators suggested he hire Barnitt and work harder, which is essentially what he did.

Cochin's accomplishments have won him



admiration from students and others. "He's better than half the other professors," said one of his students, Brian Steets of West Orange. "He keeps your attention."

Added Barnitt, "I think a person like him comes around once in 100 years."

As for himself, Cochin credits those at NJIT and also remembers his sense of humor as important to his struggle.

"It was a self-imposed psychology," he said. "By making everybody laugh, I kept my mind off the tragedy that was reality, and this served me very well in all walks of life."

Still, he is painfully aware of the necessary limits of his accomplishments, such as when his daughter was married earlier this year.

"A raised line drawing would not tell me how my daughter looked as a bride. I had a few tearful moments on that," he said.

## FIELD NOTES

By Jules Côté, Associate Director

Many changes in the Field Services Department of the Helen Keller National Center were announced in the last issue of NAT-CENT NEWS. When it went to press we had not yet finalized our selection for the new Regional Representative in Atlanta. Mr. Dean Ericson has entered the Counseling Psychology Doctoral Program at Georgia State University after representing the Helen Keller National Center as our Southeastern Regional Representative for more than four years.

After an exhaustive recruitment, we are pleased to announce our selection of Mr. Ron Cyphers for the Atlanta position. Mr. Cyphers has more than eighteen year's experience in education of blind and deaf-blind youth. Most recently, he served as Director of a group home for handicapped youth in Minnesota. He received his Master's degree from Boston University and his Bachelor's degree from Fairmont State in West Virginia.

For many years he has been active in organizations serving the retarded and physically handicapped. He and his family have served as a foster family on numerous occasions. We welcome Mr. Cyphers to our team and know he will make a difference for the deaf-blind in the southeast.

We wish to express our gratitude to Mr. Dean Wyrick for the ten years of dedicated and capable services to Helen Keller National Center and to the deaf-blind of this country. He terminated employment on November 2nd. Good luck, Dean!

As of October 1, Mr. Steve Barrett assumed the responsibility for the Technical Assistance grant. He wrote the proposal for HKNC, and we were fortunate enough to receive one of the two grants awarded by the Department of Education/Special Education Program.

I will assume temporary responsibility for the Affiliate Network until we find a replacement for Steve. We are currently recruiting for that position.

Our National Training Team has been very



active this fall. In addition to presenting programs all over the country, we have held monthly seminars for professionals; and on December 3rd we hosted 15 western State Directors. On December 10th our Regional Representatives held their semi-annual meeting at the Center.

As Field Supervisor, I am looking forward to providing leadership and promoting more comprehensive services for the deaf-blind and to an expansion of our Affiliate Network.

### NORTON FAMILY GIFT

By Lawrence Mattei

Recreation Specialist

At least twice a week, as part of the recreational program at the Helen Keller National Center, clients are taken on recreational trips to neighboring parks in nearby communities. Beside walking through the beautiful grounds of these parks, many of the clients love to use the playground equipment they contain. Such playground equipment

is great for the clients because they can use it independently, and participate in activities with little or no modification.



Former HKNC client Bill Byrnes enjoys the exercise provided by use of the new monkey bars, part of the equipment donated by the Nortons.

But there was always one particular problem. If a large group of clients wanted to participate in these outings, it required more assistance from volunteers and staff than was usually available. Many times it was necessary to keep the groups small and alternate the clients who participated in this program.

Because of this problem, we began to think seriously of having appropriate recreational equipment located on the Center's campus. At first it seemed that this was unlikely to happen, because funds were not available for such a project. Then, this



past summer, through the kindness and generosity of the Norton family, the dream became a reality.



Members of the Norton family who attended the dedication ceremony at HKNC are (l. to r.): Major Lee Norton, brother of Kathleen; Mrs. Mary Norton, her mother; and an aunt and uncle, Mr. and Mrs. Howard Murphy.

A special fund was established by Mrs. Mary Norton of Colorado, mother of Kathleen, with the assistance of Kathleen's father, Mr. Leo E. Norton of New Jersey. The playground serves as a living memorial for Kathleen, whose untimely death in an automobile accident occurred while she had been employed



as a teacher of deaf-blind children at the Wyoming Training School in Lander, Wyoming.

After careful research and planning, we considered all possible equipment and decided on an all-weather wood construction playground that included several individual sets. One set was a bench swing and three individual swings which were placed in the grassy area between the training and residence buildings. This location was perfect, as it was easy for clients to reach from both buildings, and it blended in beautifully with the surrounding area.



Larry Mattei (center) thanks members of the Norton family for their gift. Others in the photo (l. to r.), are: HKNC Client Fred Brown; HKNC staff member Jennifer Hess; Major Lee Norton and Diane Goldberg, HKNC staff interpreter.

Besides the swing sets, recreational and exercise sets were installed that provide clients with combinations of activities. These were made of the same materials and were placed adjacent to the Center's running track and skating rink. On this equipment, clients can get a good workout participating in sit-ups, push-ups, pull-ups, monkey bars, stretching, ladder climbing, and exercises on parallel bars. This equipment is used during gym classes and during evenings and weekends, and clients are able to make up their own routines.

Because of the Norton family's generous gift, the Helen Keller National Center is able to provide its clients with an expanded, improved recreational program that is an important asset to their training.

## TWO FEDERAL GRANTS FOR HKNC

As announced recently by U.S. Representative Robert Mrazek (D- 3rd Dist. N.Y.), the Helen Keller National Center for Deaf-Blind Youths and Adults has been awarded two

federal grants from the U.S. Department of Education.

A 1-year grant will provide technical assistance and funds to state and private educational agencies within the states of New Jersey, Delaware, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, and the U.S. Virgin Islands in their work with deaf-blind children from birth through the age of 21. The grant allocates \$721,000 for this task. It is the responsibility of HKNC to assess the needs of educational providers and then provide the technical assistance, consultation and/or funding to meet these needs. In addition, HKNC will explore alternate and/or innovative approaches used within these educational processes.

Families and other support systems will be directly involved in providing services. After reviewing the year's work, HKNC will publish the results of activities carried out under this federal grant.

Mr. Khogendra Das, former director of the Region I Deaf-Blind Center at the New



York Institute for the Education of the Blind, will serve as Project Coordinator, and is now located at HKNC headquarters.

The second grant, TAC (Technical Assistance Center), was formulated by Mr. Steve Barrett, who is serving as Assistant Project Director and will continue to operate out of Dallas. Dr. Angela Covert, the Project Director, joined the HKNC staff at headquarters on 12/4/84 to administer this 3-year grant, which is budgeted at \$715,000 per year.

Dr. Covert is a graduate of California State College, holds a master's degree from Indiana University and a doctorate (ED.D.) from Fordham University Graduate School of Education. Most recently, Dr. Covert designed and directed a 1-year in-service leadership training program for mid-career professionals in education and human services for the Institute for Educational Leadership, Washington, D.C.

Nancy O'Donnell, Professional Services Coordinator at HKNC has been appointed Project Coordinator for TAC and will operate out

of the Sands Point office.

The purpose of the TAC Grant is to provide technical assistance to those state agencies providing, or proposing to provide, services to facilitate the transition of deaf-blind youth from education to post education services. The project also will provide training for parents, paraprofessionals and other personnel servicing deaf-blind youth; assist in the development of inter-agency planning to provide comprehensive services; and assist in the development or replication of rehabilitative, semi-supervised or independent living centers to include deaf-blind youth. A Project Advisory Committee, including professionals from the field, parents, and personnel from state agencies, will be established to provide assistance to Project staff in meeting Project goals.

Approximately 300 agencies, including state education departments, VR Programs, Centers for Independent Living, Developmental Disabilities Councils, state and regional

deaf-blind centers, and HKNC affiliates have been surveyed as to their needs for technical assistance in support of transition programs. A consultant referral system, with a data base of approximately 350 consultants with different areas of expertise, is being developed by the TAC Project to provide the basis for meeting the technical assistance requested by the agencies. The project will also include a documentation and evaluation plan, in order to assess the Project's effectiveness in facilitating transition programs for deaf-blind youth.

Information about the TAC Project has been disseminated to agencies and programs across the country, and early responses have been extremely positive.

In announcing the grants, Rep. Mrazek stated: "These grants represent a culmination of a very successful year on the part of the center in terms of gaining federal aid for its important work .... I'm pleased that we were able to assist the center in securing these Department of Education



grants.

"The center's work in bringing new hope to the nation's deaf-blind youth and adults must go on, and I'll continue to work for federal assistance for these programs," concluded Rep. Mrazek.

### CAB TO DECIDE ON RIGHTS OF HANDICAPPED PASSENGER

(Reprinted with permission from Handicapped Rights & Regulations, 951 Pershing Drive, Silver Spring, Maryland 20901)

In one of the few formal third-party complaints the agency has received, a deaf-blind woman has told the Civil Aeronautics Board that Southwest Airlines discriminated against her under Section 504 when it refused to allow her to travel unaccompanied.

Advocacy Inc. of Austin Texas, asked the CAB to investigate the complaint of Rosaleen Perea, who, it said, has flown more than 40 times in the past three years unaccompanied and without incident. When she attempted to

make a reservation on a flight from Lubbock to San Antonio in 1983, however, she was told she could not fly without an escort who must also pay full fare.

Southwest's written policy said it can refuse transportation to handicapped persons who are not qualified, including "unaccompanied passengers who are blind and deaf, mute and blind, retarded and either blind, deaf of mute, or retarded and under 12 years of age."

Perea, who is 31 and has attended the Helen Keller National Center training programs for deaf-blind persons who travel by air, "does not require any extensive special assistance or extraordinary personal care from Southwest," the complaint said. "She does not need to be attended in order to meet the definition of a qualified handicapped person," it said. She brings an interpreter with her to help with preboarding and to instruct flight attendants how to alert her in case of emergency, it said.

Advocacy Inc. asked that Southwest be

required to distribute safety cards in braille and gather information that could be used to develop policies "which do not assume that no deaf and blind person is a qualified handicapped person."

Perea's complaint should be dismissed, Southwest responded, because its policy "is a reasonable response to valid safety concerns, is consistent with industry practice, and meets the board's general rules governing carriage of handicapped passengers." In addition, Southwest is not covered by the detailed part of CAB's Section 504 rules because it does not receive federal financial assistance, it said. A general CAB prohibition against handicapped discrimination does apply to Southwest, but the airline's policies do not violate that rule, it added. Perea is not a qualified handicapped person, as defined as one who would not "jeopardize the safe completion of the flight or the health or safety of other persons" and who "is willing and able to comply with reasonable requests of airline personnel," it



added.

In case of emergency, the "flight crew must be able to communicate quickly and effectively with all passengers," Southwest said. "Such communication would, at best, be extremely difficult with an unaccompanied deaf and blind passenger" and would be so time-consuming as to divert attention from the other passengers, the airline said. The training that Perea received would not be sufficient in a "real aircraft emergency," it said. Even if the training was enough, "to impose upon airline personnel the duty of identifying such exceptional individuals and carrying them unescorted ... would invite charges of discrimination against the airline by those persons who are denied the right to travel unescorted," it said. "Southwest's attendants do not have the time to rehearse emergency procedures" with deaf-blind passengers or to teach them how to communicate. Helping all passengers deplane and board is done in 10 minutes or less and is "crucial to Southwest's unmatched record of

efficient, low-cost air service," it concluded.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

As of this printing, the CAB has filed a formal complaint through the Enforcement Division, Office of the General Counsel, against Southwest Airlines. They have dismissed Rosa Perea's three-point complaint, but will proceed with the case, based in large part on her complaint with some differences. Basically, the legal basis for their complaint is not Section 504, as Southwest Airlines does not receive federal financial assistance.

In order to ensure that all current information is available to help an administrative law judge, who will rule on this case sometime in the early spring, HKNC and NAD are urgently requesting the following information from our readers:

1. What airlines have you flown that did make accommodations for deaf-blind persons?

2. Do you know of any safety-related incidents involving deaf-blind persons? If so, please list date, airline, place, and name and address of person.
3. We need to know the names and addresses of deaf-blind persons who have been denied the right to travel on an airline. If you have this information, please send the name and address of that person, date, place of occurrence, and the name of the airline to:

Dr. Robert J. Smithdas  
Helen Keller National Center  
111 Middle Neck Road  
Sands Point, NY 11050

BROTHERS FACE DOUBLE HANDICAP  
LEARN TO LIVE PRODUCTIVE LIVES

By Karen Knutson

(Reprinted with permission of the ARKANSAS  
GAZETTE, Little Rock, Arkansas)

Prattsville - Dwayne and Charles Pope of  
Prattsville live in a world without sight  
and sound. Despite these barriers to



communication the brothers are learning to be productive workers, to express themselves and to enjoy life.

"These are the only two (clients) I've had (who are both deaf and blind)," said Tom Phifer, counselor for Services for the Blind of the state Human Services Department in Pine Bluff. "I was lost when I started working with Charlie. I sent him for six months to Arkansas Enterprises for the Blind, but they were having trouble communicating with him, so I sent him to the Helen Keller National Deaf Blind Center in Sands Point, N.Y. He spent a year there, and was helped tremendously."

Phifer, along with the brothers' parents, Gladys and William A. Pope, were so impressed with the progress made by 23-year-old Charles that they also sent Dwayne, 39, to the facility this summer for a 10-week evaluation. "He wanted to learn mobility and Braille," Mrs. Pope said. "He ended up staying 13 weeks and learned everything he wanted to, but we're not sure what he's going to do

now."

Both men were born deaf because of a bilateral sensorineural hearing loss. They gradually lost most of their vision from progressive retinitis pigmentosa. Mrs. Pope and her husband, who is a retired used car manager, have three other children, aged 41, 31 and 27, who have no visual or hearing problems.

"The doctors just don't know for sure what caused this," Mrs. Pope said of her two sons' problems.

"Dwayne spent seven years at the Pilot School for the Deaf in Dallas, then both of them graduated from Arkansas School for the Deaf," she continued. "Before that we'd communicate by signs, by pointing, and you'd be surprised how they'd get things across to us."

But getting to that point wasn't easy. "Sure, we had problems in the beginning. We didn't know which way to turn," Mrs. Pope said. "We took the older one to all kinds of doctors, and we couldn't get any answers,

so we just struggled along. But when the younger one came along, we knew what was wrong. Things got better when we got the older one in school. Our other children accepted them real well, along with my husband and I. We'd more or less give in to them."

Phifer (who has been blind since he was 6 months old) started working with Charles the summer after he got out of Arkansas School for the Deaf. Then Phifer found him a job in the laundry department of the Veterans Administration Medical Center in North Little Rock in 1983. He's done so well there that he won the 1984 Rehabilitant of the Year award from the Arkansas Rehabilitation Association after being nominated by Phifer.

"When Charles won the award, he was plenty excited, but not any more excited than his mother and dad," Mrs. Pope said.

To communicate, the brothers "hold our hands and make signs into our hands," she said, using American Sign Language, which they learned at the Arkansas School for the Deaf.





Charles Pope participated in the Work Experience Program while he was a client at HKNC. In the above photo, he is being instructed by a worker at St. Francis Hospital, Roslyn, N.Y.

"The older boy was an excellent lip reader until he lost his vision. He can speak orally. Not everybody can understand him, but we can understand him. The younger one never spoke. He laughs and makes sounds but doesn't talk," Mrs. Pope said.

She believes Charles is happy with his job. "He's getting his first vacation this month and is going to New York to visit

his brother and a lot of other people. He made so many friends when he was in school there."

Along with their desire to learn, both brothers share a love of horses. They both have a horse at the family home in Prattsville, where they moved from Little Rock five years ago. "Dwayne liked horses, always has." his mother said. "His younger brother Rick started riding bareback broncs in rodeo. Dwayne wanted to, but for several years we wouldn't hear of it. Then we finally gave in, and I swear, those were the happiest years of his life." Charles also rides a three-wheel all-terrain vehicle around their four-acre homesite.

Mrs. Pope said she believes Dwayne is getting too old to ride in rodeos, especially since both his and his brother's vision "continues to get worse. Maybe the worsening of their eyes could arrest itself, but it's not likely."

Hercules Martin Jr., Charles Pope's supervisor at the VA hospital, has found Pope

to be an excellent employee. "Charles Pope is legally blind," he said. "He can see only a blur or a bit of color, but he can work doing what everyone here does, using the towel-folding machine or another machine that folds smaller pieces, plus he folds pajamas by hand. There are 28 people in the department, and about 40 per cent of them are handicapped. Five people are totally deaf, and several are mildly retarded."

"I'll tell you, these people are among the best ones we've got," he continued. He said Charles Pope's father drives him 27 miles to Pine Bluff, where he catches the van to Little Rock, then he goes back at the end of the day and his father picks him up. It's a round trip of about 140 miles every day. He's never been late, never fails to show up, even in bad winter weather. When I see him headed back to his work area after a break, I know it's about 30 seconds before the break is over. You can almost set your watch by him.

When there's a particularly difficult



job to explain, Martin will demonstrate the job to one of the deaf workers, who will in turn communicate with Charles. "This job is a challenge for them, and it turns out to be good for them and for us too," Martin said. "My people never call in wanting time off, and we've had several nominated for superior achievement awards. We have a good starting salary of \$4.89 an hour, with raises up to \$6.15, and good vacation and benefit plans, so they're pretty happy here."

"We wanted Dwayne and Charles to be independent. We want them to take care of themselves," Mrs. Pope said. "We won't be here forever. If they had to, I think they could live on their own."

#### HKNC RUNNER WINS GOLD MEDAL

(Reprinted with permission of the PORT WASHINGTON NEWS, Port Washington, N.Y.)

Kevin Anderson is a 23-year-old legally blind and hard of hearing man who works on the clerical staff at the Helen Keller National Center here.

Originally from Blaine, Wash., Mr. Anderson came to Port Washington in March, 1983, to become a client for training at the Keller Center.

That was a year and a half ago. Now Mr. Anderson, who completed his training in October, 1983, is working full-time and stays very active.

An athlete, he plays baseball, some football, and "anything else to stay active," according to Larry Mattei, a staff member at the Keller Center.

When Mr. Anderson was in high school, before he became blind, he wrestled competitively. But after he went blind, he stopped participating in competitive athletics.

While at the Keller Center, Mr. Anderson met some co-workers who jog on their lunch hours and decided to join them.

Last November he ran in the Port Washington Thanksgiving Day Five Mile Race, and did the course's five miles in 35 minutes.

That was the start for Mr. Anderson. He approached Mr. Mattei, the recreation

specialist at the Keller Center, and asked if he knew of any races for handicapped persons in the area.

Since Mr. Mattei is a member of the USABA (United States Association of Blind Athletes), he told Mr. Anderson he could become a member-athlete of the group.



HKNC employee Kevin Anderson holds one of the many trophies he has won in track competition.

Mr. Anderson joined the USABA and asked Mr. Mattei to be his personal running coach. Since the summer, Mr. Anderson has run under Mr. Mattei's coaching every weekend and some Wednesday nights competitively against able-bodied, sighted and hearing people.

Mr. Anderson now runs a 5.20 mile, 18.19 five-kilometer



(three-mile), and a 38.05 ten-kilometer (6.2 miles). The 38.05 time came just recently at Hofstra University, when Mr. Anderson took first place in his disabled division, besides finishing eighth in his age group and 18th overall out of 400 runners.

Mr. Anderson is now in training for the USABA. His first competition with that group took place on Oct. 14 at Montclair State College in New Jersey against the best blind runners in the east.

"Kevin's accomplishments on that day were phenomenal," said his coach. Mr. Anderson entered the 200-meter and 1,500-meter races and took gold medals in both events, running 26.4 seconds in the 200-meter and 4:50.5 in the 1,500-meter.

"New Jersey USABA was impressed," said Mr. Mattei. "With his strong finishes here, Kevin is now looking forward to more training to prepare for the 1985 USABA nationals next June, as well as hopefully competing in the International Games for the Disabled in 1988 in Korea. Keep up the good work, Kevin."

"WHAT'S HE GOT UP HIS SLEEVE"

By Cheryl M. Leister, M.S., CCC/A

and

Clifford Eggink, General Manager

ROBERT BOSCH CORPORATION,

Hearing Instruments Division

(Reprinted with permission of NATIONAL  
HEARING AID DISTRIBUTORS, INC.)

As professionals in the hearing health field, we have encountered clients for whom the benefit of amplification is questionable. These individuals offer virtually no response to pure tones presented at maximum limits of the audiometer. For a select few of the profoundly deaf, cochlear implants may be an option, but the majority must rely on our selection of one of the more conventional modes of amplification.

Audiologists, Melissa Shapiro and Debbie Simon, at the Helen Keller National Center in Sands Point, New York, offer a unique fitting approach using the Bosch MT80 SP body aid. According to Melissa, the vast

majority of the deaf-blind clients at the Helen Keller National Center offer no response to auditory stimuli other than in the range of vibrotactile stimulation. The need for these profoundly deaf and blind individuals to obtain sensory input is critical in order to maintain contact with their environment.

Research in International Symposium on Speech Communication Ability and Profound Deafness, Boothroyd (August 1970, p. 375)

concluded that an air conduction receiver is not an efficient transducer of vibrotactile stimulation. Accordingly, the Bosch MT80 SP is coupled with a compatible bone conduction receiver to provide optimum stimulation. At the Helen Keller National Center, the receiver is placed on an area of the body which the individual judges to be most sensitive to vibration. It is commonly placed on the wrist, either at the pulse or on the protrusion of the wrist bone. The mastoid process of the temporal bone is not commonly utilized as it is not especially sensitive



to vibration. The receiver is held in place with a tennis sweat band utilizing velcro hooks and loops.



Ira Cochran, shown above with HKNC Audiologist Melissa Shapiro, tests the MR80 SP body aid.

The Bosch MT80 SP is the most powerful body aid on the market today. In view of this, its auditory and vibratory forces are unique. The aid offers a HF Average full-on gain of 88dB with an HF Average SSPL 90 reaching as high as 148dB. The continuously variable tone control, gain control, maximum power output control and powerful telephone

coil provide for individualized fitting. In the vibrotactile mode, an additional significant feature is the minimal amount of "vibrotactile" ambient noise. This adaptability to accommodate vibrotactile fittings adds a new dimension in amplification for the profoundly deaf.

At 10 a.m. July 6, 1984, Mr. Ira Cochlin, a legally blind and profoundly deaf 60-year-old man, was fit with the Bosch MT80 SP with a bone conduction receiver placed on his wrist. Mr. Cochlin, an Associate Professor, has been legally blind since 1970 and profoundly deaf since 1983. Audiometric data and his subjective preference indicate that he is not a candidate for auditory amplification, and as a result, the vibrotactile mode was selected for investigation. By 11:30 a.m. that morning Mr. Cochlin had discriminated with 100% accuracy among the names of four people present. He identified the footsteps of a person approaching from 30 feet away, speech patterns indicating the beginnings and ends of conversation,

laughter, and most amazingly, structural live voice and telephone conversations.

Melissa initially communicated with Mr. Cochin solely through tactual English sign language. She informed him that with the use of the MT80 SP vibrotactile aid, he could place the fingertips on his unaided hand on the bone conduction receiver and ask questions to which she could respond No, Yes-Yes or please repeat, thereby successfully engaging in structural conversation:

Ira: "Are you anxious to go to lunch?"

Melissa: "Yes-Yes."

Ira: "Do you have blue eyes?"

Melissa: "Yes-Yes."

Ira: "This thing is amazing, it enables me to see too. I'm so moved by this. I can hear laughter once again."

This communication approach, developed by Dr. Ray L. Jones (Leadership Training Program in the Area of the Deaf, San Fernando Valley State College) and Hugh L. Moore for the Tactile Speech Indicator, is utilized



as successfully in telephone communication. The aid is positioned in the appropriate manner for telephone use and fingertips are placed on the bone oscillator. In this way, structural questions and closed set answers can provide access to limited telephone communication.

Generally clients require intensive rehabilitation training to develop gross environmental skills of detection, recognition and identification. Mr. Cochlin's fine discrimination skills enable him to utilize this amplification system and thereby help to remove him from a world of sensory isolation.

This MT80 SP fitting approach has been highly successful with the deaf/blind population. It can be used with equal satisfaction for other populations as an adjunct/augmentive means of communication such as speech reading. If indicated, auditory amplification and vibrotactile stimulation can be combined through the use of a Y cord to effect a bimodal input.

## DEAF-BLIND PROGRAM SET

The initiation of a deaf-blind program has begun at CLASS Ltd. in Columbus, Kansas. Staff members have been trained at Helen Keller National Center to serve deaf-blind adults in the three county area of Cherokee, Crawford, and Labette, all in the southeast corner of Kansas.

There are many deaf-blind multi-handicapped adults in America. Many of these fall between the ages of 16 and 21 years of age and have additional handicapping conditions. These individuals for the past twelve years have been striving to learn to communicate, to dress, to feed themselves and to travel safely.

"Professionals in the field of deaf-blindness have repeatedly found that appropriate residential and job placements for deaf-blind developmentally disabled individuals are very difficult to locate," stated Mary Ellen O'Brien, M.A., deaf-blind specialist from the Helen Keller National

Center. She continued, "Frequently a residential facility or a workshop can be found, but seldom can both be found in the same area. A facility such as CLASS Ltd., which provides long term residential placement and sheltered employment and which is willing to work with deaf-blind multi-handicapped individuals, is vital to improving existing services to this population.

This program was made possible through a \$53,177 grant awarded by the Office of the Developmental Disabilities, Topeka.

For further information about the program, contact CLASS Ltd., P.O. Box 266, Columbus, Kansas 66725.

(From the Kansas Association of the Deaf Newsletter, November, 1984)

## APARTMENTS FOR THE DEAF-BLIND

In Los Angeles, California, Muriel Hersom and her group are expecting completion of thirteen new apartment units for deaf-blind persons. These apartments are



specially designed for deaf-blind residents, and are in addition to older apartments which are already occupied by deaf-blind residents and staff.

Deaf-blind persons who wish to apply for apartments must be capable of self-care and reasonably self-reliant. Ms. Hersom and her group provide support services and assist deaf-blind persons in various activities.

Deaf-blind persons who wish further information should write directly to:

Ms. Muriel Hersom  
6819 North Figueroa St.  
Los Angeles, CA 90042

The apartments are modern and comfortable, and offer companionship with other deaf-blind residents and dedicated staff and volunteers.

## WORLD BLIND UNION FORMED

At a joint conference of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind and the International Federation of the Blind, held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, November, 1984, the two international organizations for and of the blind became a single international organization dedicated to promoting the welfare and interests of the blind populations throughout the world. The name of the new organization is the World Blind Union.

The standing Committee on Services to the Deaf-Blind, which was formerly part of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind, has now been transferred to the World Blind Union, and is now called the Committee on Activities of Deaf-Blind People.

The purpose of the Committee on Activities of Deaf-Blind People is to improve education and rehabilitation of deaf-blind persons throughout the world, and to find solutions to the unique problems that

accompany this dual disability. Dr. Robert J. Smithdas of the Helen Keller National Center, who was chairman of the World Council's Committee on Services to the Deaf-Blind, has been appointed chairman of the new committee of the World Blind Union.

Members of each of the standing committees shall be experts in the field or persons with a special interest in the field concerned. Each Standing Committee may create Sub-committees to cover specific fields within the broader scope of the committee. Committees will work in close co-operation with the United Nations and other agencies working in its fields of interest.

The president of the newly formed World Blind Union is Sheikh Abdullah M. Al-Ghanim of Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

HAPPY 1985!

A Very Happy New Year to all NAT-CENT NEWS readers from everyone at the Helen Keller National Center!



## DREAMS

Dare to live your dreams,  
dare to hope that one will be  
the perfect answer.

Like the seeds that hold  
the promise of a harvest,  
dreams can make life bloom.

And when all else has failed,  
say that I dreamed one vision  
that gave life meaning.

- Robert J. Smithdas



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NAT-CENT NEWS

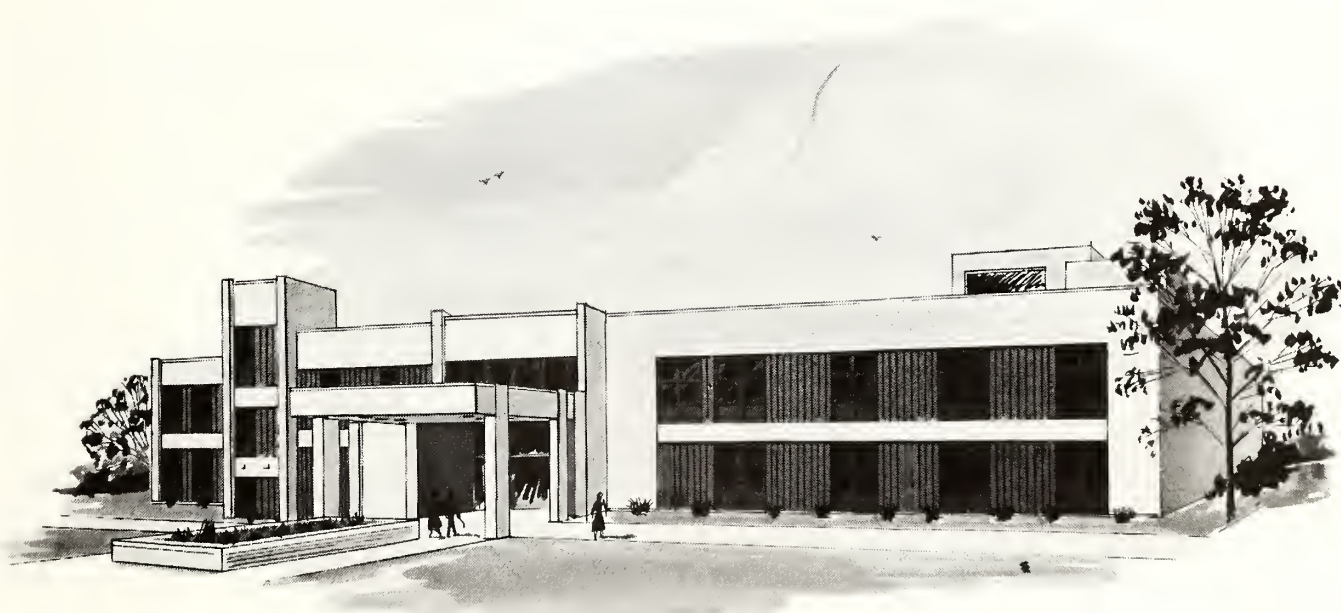
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## EDITORIAL

## BRAILLE FOR THE DEAF-BLIND

By Robert J. Smithdas, LHD, Litt.D.

During the past few years there has been a resurgent interest in braille as a working tool for blind people.

Developed more than a hundred years ago, braille has served blind people as the most dependable source of information and recreational reading, and has given knowledge and pleasure to countless thousands of visually impaired and blind readers throughout the world. It is used for personal correspondence, note-taking, record keeping, labeling and filing, and other tasks essential for daily living. Recently new technologies have developed machines for high-speed production of braille materials, and "paperless braille" devices that are opening up new opportunities for blind persons who work with computers and in various technical fields. Braille is more important than ever, and it is little wonder that there is now a braille revival movement in the United States.



But if braille is so important to blind people, it has even greater importance for those who have lost—or are losing—both sight and hearing. Deaf-blindness is an extremely isolating disability that makes it very difficult for a deaf-blind individual to gather information and knowledge of live activities. Braille can fill this void by providing accessible reading materials, and by serving as a method of communication with others. Devices such as Tellatouch and Tele-Braille are making life easier for many deaf-blind people today by making it possible for them to communicate with others directly, face-to-face or through telecommunication.

Every deaf-blind person should be given the opportunity to learn braille, even if this means learning only the simple alphabet and using it for simple, everyday tasks. For those who are able to master it, braille can be a gold mine of information and pleasure, and the key to a world where loneliness is a temporary state of mind.

## INDEPENDENT LIVING - AN ONGOING SAGA

By Elizabeth Janson

Supervisor, Home Management Department

Back in the days when the National Center began life on its own in a converted warehouse in New Hyde Park, many of the programs now in existence at HKNC were only dreams. Skills that would enable a deaf-blind person to live independently or to resume responsibilities in the care of a home were taught, of course. Serious thought was given to how the Home Management program might develop. How could it become more realistic? What would be needed to give the client more confidence in his/her abilities? Perhaps that is where, why and how the Independent Living Experience really began.

The program officially started in February, 1977. Taking a look back to old memos —there is one from the former director Harry J. Spar. It states that "one of the apartments in the residence be used for selected trainees to practice independent

housekeeping before completing their training." And again, "each trainee assigned to the apartment will be expected to prepare his own meals, take care of his own laundry, do all necessary housecleaning and perform all other activities entailed in independent housekeeping." There is another memo from Louis J. Bettica to Mr. Spar stating that the first resident, Mr. Jose Infante, was being oriented to the ILE apartment and the program was ready to begin.

Since that time, the program has grown and changed to meet the needs of the various people who were in the ILE. Initially the participating clients had almost completed training in all the various areas at HKNC. Some were involved in all day work experiences either on or off campus. Since the ILE was to follow "real life" as closely as possible, all chores—cooking, cleaning, shopping, etc. were to be done in the client's "free" time. The client was to have the opportunity to demonstrate those skills learned during training. He/she was to be able to



communicate clearly with the public, maintain an apartment, cook wholesome meals, gratify recreational and social needs, work productively and travel safely. The client met with the Home Management instructor once or twice each week to discuss any problems, and submit receipts for food and household supplies purchased during the week. There is a budget of \$25 per week for this purpose. The client was expected to make his/her own arrangements for shopping.

After the program ran as described for a period of time, a few facts emerged. The clients gained a great deal of confidence from the experience. It was possible to inform the state counselors more precisely about the client's ability to live independently; or to specify the support services needed. However, with rehabilitation money becoming tight, ways to make the program more efficient were explored. It also became clear that the ILE could be modified to serve the need of more clients. A second program, Modified Independent Living Program was

established. Instead of the program being a demonstration of skills already learned, it became a medium for teaching the needed skills. For some clients this program serves as an introduction to the full ILE. For others it is a separate program. In this newer program the client will still be in regularly scheduled classes in Home Management, Communication, Mobility, etc. However, the Home Management Class takes place in the client's apartment. The focus of the class remains the same—teaching those skills that will enable the deaf-blind person to live as independently as possible.

Not all the clients scheduled into Home Management will move into a residence apartment. There are prerequisites for the MILP. The candidate must demonstrate (1) consistent kitchen safety in the training kitchen; (2) ability to perform basic household tasks; (3) maturity of judgment and a willingness to comply with the rules and goals of the program.

Often the client will move into the



HKNC Client Catherine Dominie becomes acquainted with the kitchen of an ILE apartment.

apartment and be responsible for its upkeep; but to start, may be cooking only breakfast. Lessons on meal and menu planning, making shopping lists, cooking and cleaning techniques continue. Because the classes are in the apartment they become more real. Problems are dealt with on a day by day basis. The client has an opportunity to try different ways to store and label food and other items. Dividing a pound of ground meat or a package of chops before freezing becomes understandable. Learning to make a menu and check food in the pantry or refrigerator becomes a part of making a shopping list.





Catherine receives instruction in food packaging from Assistant Instructor Melida Johnson, of HKNC's Home Management Department.

While Ms. Johnson observes, Catherine carefully prepares the food packages, which will then be labeled in braille for easy identification.



Photos by Richard McKay

Living in one of the ILE apartments gives the client a certain amount of prestige and freedom from the residence routine. It has happened that the client becomes so involved with cooking and housekeeping that class work suffers. More than once a client has run to the residence workers for advice on a cooking project.

Dealing with emergencies is part of living alone. There have been a variety of mishaps in the apartments. There is a client who can describe in detail what happens when you put regular detergent in the dishwasher because you have no more dishwashing detergent. What happens when the roof leaks? There was a tearful client who had to contend with a monumental leak when the building air conditioner on the roof broke, sending gallons of water down on her spotless apartment.

Then there is the mundane and daily occurrence of having to cook for yourself after a full day's work. And just a taste of the loneliness that may be waiting for those who live alone.

Some of the comments made by clients who completed the ILE, round out the picture.

—I like the ILE very much, because I like to eat what I want.

—When I lived in the ILE apartment, some trainees bother me, that is not right.

—I very much liked being independent although at times it got tiring.

—I learned to do many things I never did before.

—Again it was a good experience. I really enjoyed it. I know what I would need to do if I had to live alone.

This article is about an ongoing saga—a story of a dream that turned into a successful program. A program that will grow, change shape and fit itself to the needs of the deaf-blind people it serves.

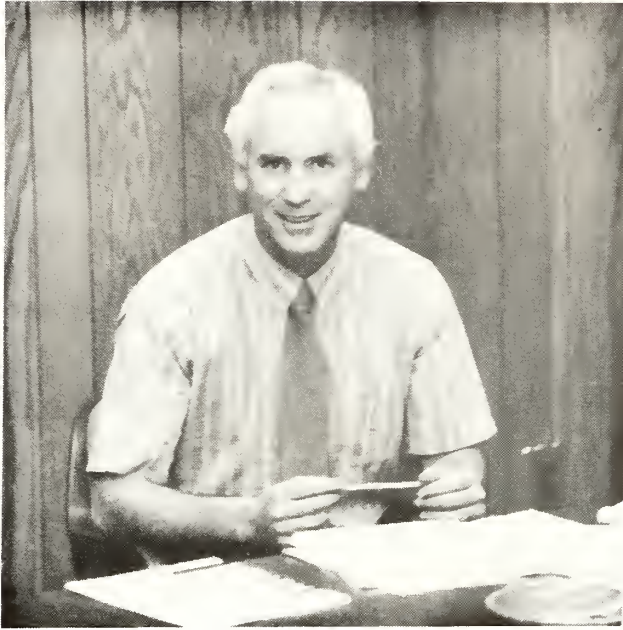
## FIELD NOTES

By Jules Coté, Associate Director

Change is constant, and we hope it is constructive!

On March first, Mr. Joseph McNulty





Mr. Joseph McNulty

assumed his new position as national coordinator of the Center's affiliated services. Mr. McNulty was previously director of the Center's residence, and before that he was a mobility instructor. In addition to his six years of service at

the Center, he also taught physical education and recreation to the handicapped. He received his bachelor's degree from Niagara University and his master's degree from Adelphi University. We are pleased to have Mr. McNulty coordinating the Center's affiliated services.

Replacing Mr. McNulty as residence director is Ms. Leslie Neese, a former staff specialist from the Conklin Center in Florida.

The Center has awarded a new grant to the state of Rhode Island to establish a deaf-blind specialist position. Also,

beginning June 1 of this year, the Center will fund a position at the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Blindness and Low Vision at Missouri State University. This will ensure that research on vocational employment of the deaf-blind will be included in the Center's research projects.

One of the two placement specialist positions at the Center is still vacant. However, Ms. Marcia Powdermaker has been traveling widely to provide services for deaf-blind persons needing assistance. It is hoped that we can fill the vacant position sometime in July.

From the desk of the Center's National Training Team, Sr. Bernadette Wynne reports that the NTT enjoyed a welcome and much needed reprieve from the hassles of airline travel. The NTT quickly pulled out the list of "things to do when we are in town" and began checking them off! These included updating presentations, videotaping new programs and editing previous tapes, making additional slides to enhance the description of work

experiences, and developing transparencies to be used with the overhead projector. We regret the loss of one of the members of the NTT, Maureen McGowan, who moved to Colorado, and welcome Mary Michaud as its new member.

### INVESTMENT IN PEOPLE PAYS

#### NATIONAL

"HELEN KELLER DEAF-BLIND AWARENESS WEEK"

June 23 - 29, 1985

By Barbara Hausman

Assistant Director, Community Education Dept.

A congressional resolution, J.H. #227, was introduced into the House of Representatives by Congressman David E. Bonior (D-MI) along with three principal co-sponsors; Congressmen Benjamin A. Gilman (R-NY); Robert J. Mrazek, (D-NY); and James M. Jeffords (R-VT) designating the last week of June in 1985 as "Helen Keller Deaf-Blind Awareness Week." This week is particularly symbolic because June 27th marks the birthday of the most respected and renowned deaf-blind



American, Helen Keller.

After developing the first national deaf-blind awareness week last June, the Helen Keller National Center launched a joint effort for 1985's celebration by establishing a coordinating committee composed of the leading agencies and organizations concerned with meeting the needs of deaf-blind Americans. Its members are: the American Association of the Deaf-Blind (AADB), representing deaf-blind consumers; the American Foundation for the Blind (AFB), representing blind systems that provide services to the deaf-blind; Gallaudet College, Washington, DC, representing the deaf systems that provide education and services to the deaf-blind; the Helen Keller National Center for Deaf-Blind Youths and Adults, the single national facility that provides evaluation and rehabilitation training for deaf-blind persons; and the North American Association of Deaf-Blind Persons (NAADBP), representing educators and parents of deaf-blind persons.

The Committee's goal is to inform,

educate and sensitize the general public about the needs of the deaf-blind population and create an awareness of the potentials and abilities of deaf-blind persons. The crucial message is that through education, training and job preparation deaf-blind children and adults can become independent, productive and contributing members of society in the community and in the workplace.

INVESTMENT IN PEOPLE PAYS is the week's theme and reinforces the concept of mutual benefits—for society and for deaf-blind persons. Society's investment in providing economic and human resources will ensure that these "doubly-disabled" Americans can develop the skills needed for socialization, recreation, personal management, independent living and employment. Ultimately, all American citizens benefit.

Loss of sight and hearing deprives an individual of the two primary senses through which one becomes aware of environment and acquires knowledge of the world at large. The dual disability imposes serious problems

of communication, mobility, social and vocational adjustment that often lead to isolation and loneliness. Historically, this population has been neglected, but within the past 20 years some progress has been made to solve these difficult problems, primarily through the efforts of professional workers in education and rehabilitation and through scientists and engineers who have produced aids and devices that are adding a new dimension to the independence of deaf-blind people. Though some 40,000 Americans have been identified as deaf-blind, many individuals still remain misdiagnosed, inappropriately placed and even "hidden away." The need for services has also increased since the mid-sixties when some 6,000 children were born deaf-blind due to an epidemic of maternal rubella.

Agencies, organizations and individuals can provide assistance and support for this national campaign in several ways:

1. Send letters to your congressmen urging them to co-sponsor Resolution H.J. #227.

218 Representatives' and 60 Senators'



signatures are needed for passage of the bill and subsequent signature by President Reagan.

2. Plan activities at your facility or in your hometown during June 23-29, i.e., seminars, volunteer and employer recognition programs; sports events; community events like a carnival, parade, etc.
3. Contact local media for public service announcements (samples are available from the committee) and newspaper articles or letters to the editor re: deaf-blind individuals.
4. Disseminate posters and place magazine ads (as public service) which the committee is developing.
5. Contact local and state politicians to issue proclamations and join you in celebrations and activities.

For further information, please contact the chairman or one of the committee members:

Dr. Robert J. Smithdas (Chairman)

Director of Community Education, HKNC

(516) 944-8900 (TDD and Voice)

Mr. Roderick Macdonald, President  
 American Association of the Deaf-Blind  
 (301) 589-7279 (TDD and Voice) (evening)  
 (301) 459-2121 (days)

Dr. Saul Freedman  
 Director of National Consultants  
 American Foundation for the Blind  
 (212) 620-2067

Dr. Mervin D. Garretson  
 Office of the President  
 Gallaudet College  
 (202) 651-5005 (TDD and Voice)

Dr. Robert Dantona, President  
 North American Association of  
 Deaf-Blind Persons  
 (617) 926-1601 (evening)  
 (617) 254-4041 (TDD and Voice) (days)

## DEAF-BLIND COUPLE TACKLES LIVING

By Ellie Grossman

Newspaper Enterprise Association

NEW YORK—Michelle Smithdas, 36, is dark-haired, short, a self-assured woman who smiles brilliantly at you and speaks almost as everyone else does. So at first, you speak back. You smile. You forget that she's looking at you but can't see; talking but can't hear what she's saying because she can't hear at all.

It's only when her interpreter stops finger spelling into Mrs. Smithdas' left hand—and neglects to tell her why so that Mrs. Smithdas reaches out to her—that you realize how utterly cut off she is.

Born with defective hearing, Mrs. Smithdas went deaf at 16 and as a senior at Gallaudet College for the Deaf, she went blind after a snowmobile accident.

"That was the worst time," she says. "I felt I'd lost all my independence." Still, she graduated from Gallaudet and, in 1972,



entered the Helen Keller National Center for Deaf-Blind Youths and Adults in Sands Point, N.Y., which rehabilitates deaf-blind people from all over the country and operates 10 field offices.

In 1975, the Center hired her to teach other deaf-blind clients to communicate through braille, finger spelling, etc., and that same year, she married Dr. Robert Smithdas, the Center's director of Community Education, who is also deaf and blind.



Michelle and Bob Smithdas

The couple lives alone in their own home and, while they do rely on others to get around, help pay bills and translate their

mail into braille, mostly they live on their own.

And the way Mrs. Smithdas functions—as a wife, full-time teacher and part-time graduate student in Education of the Blind and Visually Impaired at Columbia University—is nothing short of astonishing.

For instance, household tasks that seem beyond her doing, she simply does. Like food shopping.

"I bring a typed list to the supermarket and ask store personnel to print prices of items in my palm with their finger tip," she says. Once the groceries are home, she goes on, "We put abbreviated braille labels on everything. For instance, TMT means tomatoes, and if it's tomato soup, I'll add "SP."

Still, if a can reaches its place on her shelves unmarked, she can often distinguish its contents by shaking it or, she says, by dipping a finger into it. "If it's not what I want, I put it away for the next day, or," she says, laughing, "I alter the menu."

Cooking also poses no great problem for

her. "I have a gas stove and I judge the height of the flame with my hand. I can tell when something is boiling by the steam coming up and by feeling the vibrations of the bubbles through the pot handle. And, of course, if something burns, you smell it."

While she does need assistance buying clothes— "I ask the person with me, what color is this? Does it look nice? What are the washing instructions, etc.?" She does her own laundry.

"My machines are labeled in braille so I can choose the water and temperature and, if a garment's washable, I put a staple in the label. No staple tells me the garment can't be washed." And a braille tag tells her everything she needs to know about the item.

And so life around the house for the Smithdas' is pretty much what it is for most couples. True, they converse with each other by finger spelling and often use a Tactile Communicator, a vibrating beeper device each carries to signal the other. The Communicator also alerts them to the doorbell and the



phone, which they can use by means of equipment that translates the caller's voice into intelligible vibrations.

But otherwise, she says, "We've established patterns like other couples. If I want to call Bob for dinner, for instance, I go to the living room because I know he'll be there."

As for pastimes, they've more than enough to keep busy. They subscribe to brailled versions of everything from Better Homes and Gardens to Fortune and a weekly edition of The New York Times, which, unfortunately, she says, often arrives days late.

They see friends. Go to restaurants. Church. Take walks outside the house and attend conventions for the deaf and blind. And, while her husband writes poetry, Mrs. Smith-das likes to "hook rugs, do macrame and care for my plants. It's so nice to see them grow. And I'm so sad when they don't," she says, pretending to finger the leaves she tends at home.

On occasion, they even fight. "Since our

fingers are our mouths, we can tell when the other person is angry by the touch, or the fingers start going fast and one of us will say, 'You're not listening to me!'"

And for Mrs. Smithdas, there's always her homework. "I go to Columbia one day a week, after work. I'm so lucky that two or three people in class take notes for me which are translated into braille. And the volunteers who take me to class finger spell to me so I can follow the lecture." Volunteers have also created brailled versions of her textbooks, and transcribe her completed assignments from braille into typescript.

Still, for all her participation, there are times, she says, "when I do feel the isolation. I think, is the world still alive? What is happening? We want to know what is going on around us and sometimes, it seems so very, very quiet."

"But then," she adds, with that smile of hers, "communication does arise and you feel better. It brings you back to life."

## TENTH ANNUAL AADB CONVENTION

The tenth Annual Open Convention of the American Association of the Deaf-Blind will be held June 16-23, 1985, on the campus of Montclair State College, Montclair, New Jersey. The theme of this convention will be "Conquering the Obstacles." An exciting week of learning and fun is planned, and it is hoped this will be the biggest and best AADB convention ever.

This year there will be four categories of participants—delegates, support service providers, observers, and guests.

1. Delegates are deaf-blind individuals who are entitled to participate in all convention activities. Delegates must pay the convention fee. In the past, some delegates have asked to be accepted as interpreters or guides in order not to have to pay the convention fee. However, it is necessary that all deaf-blind participants pay convention fees. There will be two fee levels this year for delegates: the fee for AADB members will be



\$180, while the fee for nonmembers will be \$200. AADB members are those who have already paid their 1984-85 dues, or who send payment for 1985-1986 dues with their registration forms.

2. Support service providers are those who are able and willing to help out as interpreters, guides, braille transcribers, and so forth. SSP's work under the direction of a support services coordinator, who will be responsible for scheduling interpreting shifts, ensuring that adequate support is available for all activities, etc. In return for donating their skills, AADB and the Host Committee will pay the expenses of all those accepted as support service providers. SSP's, therefore, are not required to pay the convention fee.

However, if an SSP wishes to pay his/her own way as a donation to help with convention expenses, this will be very much appreciated, and will be tax deductible.

3. Guests will be individuals invited as special guests of AADB, such as recipients of

annual awards. They will be entitled to participate in all convention activities and will not be required to pay the convention fee.

4. Observers are all non-delegates who come as professionals, or who cannot, or will not, serve as support service providers. Observers are asked to pay a fee of \$50 per day, or \$250 for the entire week. If an observer stays off-campus, the fee will be \$25 per day.

For all participants, there will be an extra fee of \$25 if the individual arrives on Saturday, June 15. However, meals will not be served until Sunday evening, and interpreter/guides will not be available till Sunday noon.

Sunday, June 23, is the official day of departure. Breakfast will be served, but all participants should plan to leave the Montclair campus by noon of that day.

For applications and registration forms and additional information, write to:  
1985 AADB Convention, 1188 Raymond Boulevard,  
Room 303, Newark, New Jersey 07102. Telephone: (201) 648-2557 (TTY or Voice)

## TAC PROJECT PROGRESSES!

By Dr. Angela Covert, Project Director

In the last issue of NAT-CENT NEWS, the KNC Technical Assistance Center (TAC) Project was introduced. The project has now been in place for six months and has been making steady progress towards its goal of providing technical assistance in support of transition services for deaf-blind youth who have reached the age of 22.

One of the first objectives of the project was to determine the technical assistance needs of the agencies it would be serving. This was accomplished by conducting a national Program Needs Assessment of nearly 350 individuals and agencies. This survey requested each agency to identify the five most important areas of need for technical assistance in order for their program to provide services to transitional age deaf-blind youth. To our knowledge, this is the first survey of its kind to be conducted. The response rate was excellent, and as of March 1, 1985, one



hundred sixty four responses had been received.

The response data was categorized and analyzed in order to identify the most common priority areas. The variety of needs expressed ranged in nature from staff training to family services and interagency agreements.

On a national level, the most common area of need for technical assistance was in the area of Independent Living. This included staff training in independent living techniques for deaf-blind, how to develop group homes and information on funding sources. The second most common area of need was for assistance in Vocational Services, including vocational evaluation, vocational training and placement. The third area identified was information on Rehabilitation Methods, Models and Techniques for working with this population.

This information, along with an overview of the other expressed needs and their relative importance will serve as an invaluable

tool to TAC in helping us to prioritize requests for technical assistance in the coming years. In addition, this data will be quite useful in facilitation cooperation and networking among and between agencies which share common needs.

If information relating to the TAC program is needed, please contact Dr. Angela Covert, (516) 944-8900, extension 311 or 312.

### HKNC JOB BANK

By Marcia Powdermaker, Placement Specialist

In October, 1983, the HKNC Job Bank was introduced to the readers of the NAT-CENT NEWS. This is an information source containing types of jobs in which deaf-blind people are employed; the jobs they have had in the past; and the names and location of their employers. It also includes information on the type of impairment a person has, and his/her communication techniques. Approximately 100 people have answered the questionnaire published in the October, 1983 issue, and the

information is stored in a computer.

This data is invaluable in telling people about the wide variety of jobs people have, or in answering questions such as whether there are any deaf-blind persons employed as woodworkers; whether there are any deaf-blind persons self-employed in Ohio; or whether there are any Ushers Syndrome persons employed as computer programmers. It also tells us the type of visual or hearing impairment, and added to the questionnaire that follows is a new question, "Are there any aids or devices that are useful to you on the job, or any accommodations made for you in the workplace?"

The more information we have in the Job Bank the more useful it will be for job seekers, professionals working with deaf-blind persons, and employers.

If you are working now, or have worked in the past, we at the Helen Keller National Center ask that you fill out the questionnaire. If you have already mailed it to us, but have made some changes or wish to tell about aids or devices on the job, please let



us know. If you choose to answer the questionnaire and there are particular questions you don't want to answer, please mark an X in the space provided for an answer. Then we will know you saw the question but choose not to answer it.

Even though this questionnaire is published infrequently, we always want to hear about what people are doing in the work world. So please feel free to write to us. Also, if you know of other people who may want to contribute, please share this information with them.

We thank each person who shares this information with us, with the hope that another person will benefit from it.

Please send the completed questionnaire to:

Marcia Powdermaker  
Placement Specialist  
Helen Keller National Center  
111 Middle Neck Rd.  
Sands Point, NY 11050

## JOB BANK QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Your name \_\_\_\_\_
2. Your address \_\_\_\_\_
3. Have you worked? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
4. Where? \_\_\_\_\_  
(name of workplace)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(address of workplace)

5. What is your job? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Do you still work there? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
7. How long? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Have you had other jobs? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
9. What were they? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

10. Do you use any aids or devices on the job?
11. Which of these best describes your vision?

- \_\_\_\_\_ Totally blind
- \_\_\_\_\_ Light perception only
- \_\_\_\_\_ Can see more than light but not  
enough to read large print
- \_\_\_\_\_ Can read large print
- \_\_\_\_\_ Can read regular print

12. Do you have a problem with peripheral  
(side) vision? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_
13. How do you receive communication? (Check  
as many as apply.)
- \_\_\_\_ see signs/fingerspelling
  - \_\_\_\_ see lip movements
  - \_\_\_\_ read print
  - \_\_\_\_ feel signs/fingerspelling
  - \_\_\_\_ use Tellatouch
  - \_\_\_\_ hearing
  - \_\_\_\_ other
14. How did you lose your vision:
- \_\_\_\_ born with problem
  - \_\_\_\_ gradually lost vision as child
  - \_\_\_\_ suddenly lost vision as child
  - \_\_\_\_ gradually lost vision as adult
  - \_\_\_\_ suddenly lost vision as adult
15. How do you express communication?  
(Check all that apply.)
- \_\_\_\_ sign
  - \_\_\_\_ fingerspell
  - \_\_\_\_ speak
  - \_\_\_\_ write
  - \_\_\_\_ other



16. What is your highest level of education:

- ☐ less than 6th grade
- ☐ less than 12th grade
- ☐ high school graduate
- ☐ some college
- ☐ college graduate
- ☐ some graduate school
- ☐ have advanced degree

17. What other training do you have?

How long?

- ☐ Vocational technical school
- ☐ Rehabilitation program
- ☐ On-the-job training
- ☐ Other

18. Do you live alone? ☐

with husband or wife ☐

with other family members ☐

with friends ☐

in group home or special residence ☐

19. Can we contact you to ask more?

☐ Yes ☐ No

20. What is your telephone/TDD number?

\_\_\_\_\_

## PORT LIONS TRUST FUND GIVES SCHOLARSHIPS

(Reprinted from the PORT WASHINGTON NEWS)



Mr. Jules Coté, a long-time Lions Club member, displays the Lions Honor Roll plaque. The 1984-85 president of the Port Washington Lions Club, Mr. Raymond Hirsch, is at left, and at right is Mr. Bertram Allan, Jr., past-president.

Two years ago the Port Washington Lions Club established a trust fund at the Helen Keller National Center for Deaf-Blind Youths and Adults to promote services for the deaf-blind. The money has been allocated for scholarships for clients whose referring states are unable because of recent budget cuts, or unwilling, to pay their tuition costs.

For each \$1,000 contribution, the name of the past president, his club, and the year of service is permanently engraved on a Lions Honor Roll plaque which is displayed in the

lobby of the Helen Keller training building. "Scholarships have already served as a vital link to training, job preparation, and employment for several deaf-blind persons," said a Keller Center spokeswoman.

Historically, the Lions have fostered an interest and concern for the disabled, even when they were a young service organization in 1927. At that time, Helen Keller addressed an international Lions' convention and as a result, the members were inspired to adopt an agenda which focused on working with and for the blind population, according to a Lions' spokesman.

In 1975, the president of the International Organization of Lions expanded this commitment to include the deaf-blind population.

The center was founded by an Act of Congress and is supported by federal funding, as well as contributions from individuals and groups.

Any clubs interested in honoring their past presidents may call Jules Coté, Helen Keller associate director and long-time Lions member, at 516-944-8900.



APPEALS COURT SAYS 504 COVERS  
DISCRIMINATION BY AIRLINES

(Reprinted with permission from Handicapped Rights and Regulations, 951 Pershing Dr., Silver Spring, Maryland 20901)

All commercial airlines using federally funded airports are subject to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act that prevents discrimination against handicapped persons, the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia has ruled unanimously.

Prior to the ruling, the Civil Aeronautics Board, which became a division of the Department of Transportation Jan. 1, interpreted Section 504 to apply only to those airlines receiving specific federal subsidies. But the appeals court found that sufficient federal financial aid is provided to federally funded airports to make them fall under the authority of the Rehabilitation Act.

"The government spends over \$2 billion annually to provide a national system of air traffic control, which employs highly trained

personnel to monitor and control takeoffs, landings and flights of civil and military aircraft," wrote Senior Circuit Judge Bazelon. "The safe and efficient operation of commercial air transportation depends in great measure, if not entirely, upon the proper functioning of the system.... This crucial assistance to all commercial airlines, and any airlines making use of the system should be subject to regulations promulgated under Section 504."

The suit against the CAB was filed in the fall of 1982 by the Paralyzed Veterans of America, the American Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities and the American Council of the Blind. According to Douglas Parker, director of the Institute for Public Representation at Georgetown Law Center who was the lawyer for the three groups, his clients objected to the CAB's final ruling. CAB contended that Section 504 applied only to a few airlines, such as Frontier, Piedmont and Republic, who received "subsidies for the transportation of mail," and other small

carriers who received direct federal subsidies for providing essential air transportation to small communities. Other major airlines had no "legal obligation" to comply with parts of the act, CAB said.

In its opinion, the appeals court referred to the 1984 Supreme Court ruling in Grove City v. Bell, which focused on the "program-specific nature" of federal aid to colleges. However, the court said the implications of Grove City could not clearly be applied. But in spite of its uncertainty, the court said it found that Congress had shown a "clear intent" in passing the Rehabilitation Act by listing transportation as one of five areas to which Section 504 was meant to apply. "That issue (Grove City) need not be reached, however, to hold that the CAB erred in failing to apply its Section 504 regulations to all commercial airlines," the court concluded.

While the court decided for the petitioners on the key issue of federal funding, it did not uphold their charges that CAB's



definition of "qualified handicapped person" also violated Section 504. The court asked the CAB to reexamine the "48-hour notice" that handicapped persons who need "extensive special assistance" must give in advance of a flight.

Parker predicted that the court ruling would produce significant changes in uniformity and accessibility of air travel for handicapped persons. Predictability of services will be a norm for travelers who now suffer from insecurity, he said. In the past, the situation has arisen where a handicapped person with a round-trip ticket would fly to a small town—only to be told later that the airline could not accommodate him or her on a return flight, he pointed out.

### WORTHY OF PRAISE

Every year at the Kansas Elks Training Center for the Handicapped, a work training center for disabled adults in Wichita, Kansas, annual awards are given to the best

client employees and most improved employees in each department. The recipients for the awards are voted upon by co-workers, case managers and work supervisors.

This year, Bert Smith, a former HKNC student, was awarded a framed, gold lettered certificate naming him as the "Best Employee of 1984 in the Air Filter Department."

Bert transferred into this department where the employees produce air filters for air conditioners and furnaces in late August. He is one of two blind persons in this work area, and all of his filter construction is done entirely through the tactile mode. For him to receive this award after being in this work area for only approximately four months and competing against sighted employees was quite an honor for him.

He was surprised and pleased when he discovered he had received such a high honor. In addition, his appreciation for his fellow workers increased when he learned that they had participated in the voting process.

Bert was so pleased with the award that

he took it to Church, wrote home about it, and placed it above his bed in his room. Bert said he "wished everyone could see it!"

The staff and employees at KETCH share Bert's pride and wanted you to know of his recent accomplishment.

From: Becky Lankard, Case Manager/  
Coordinator, Kansas Elks  
Training Center for the  
Handicapped, Inc.

### TDD

(Telephone Device for the Deaf)

Amid the isolation of this dark and silent  
retreat,

My eager fingers stroke Aladdin's lamp,  
Evoke the images that come flocking in  
And bring the animated, outer world within.

They come to embrace my lonely soul,  
To feed my mind's hungry, gnawing void,  
Illuminate the profound, endless night,  
And rend the stillness with speech and sound.



The genie leads me from the silence and  
the night  
Onto the bright and peopled paths,  
Where I meet with friends and those I love  
For enchanted moments; to reach out, touch,  
and linger  
With them, to share the laughter and the care.  
  
From the tunnel, hushed and dark, from a  
world set apart,  
Released, my imprisoned spirit issues forth  
And soars with a freedom newly found  
Into the heights yet never tried,  
With hopes revived, that were long denied.

— By Celia Levy

Editor's Note:

Celia Levy is a resident of Los Angeles, California. Although deaf-blind, she has won many prizes for her sculpture and work in macrame. She wrote the above poem in appreciation for her recently received TDD.



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**NAT-CENT NEWS**

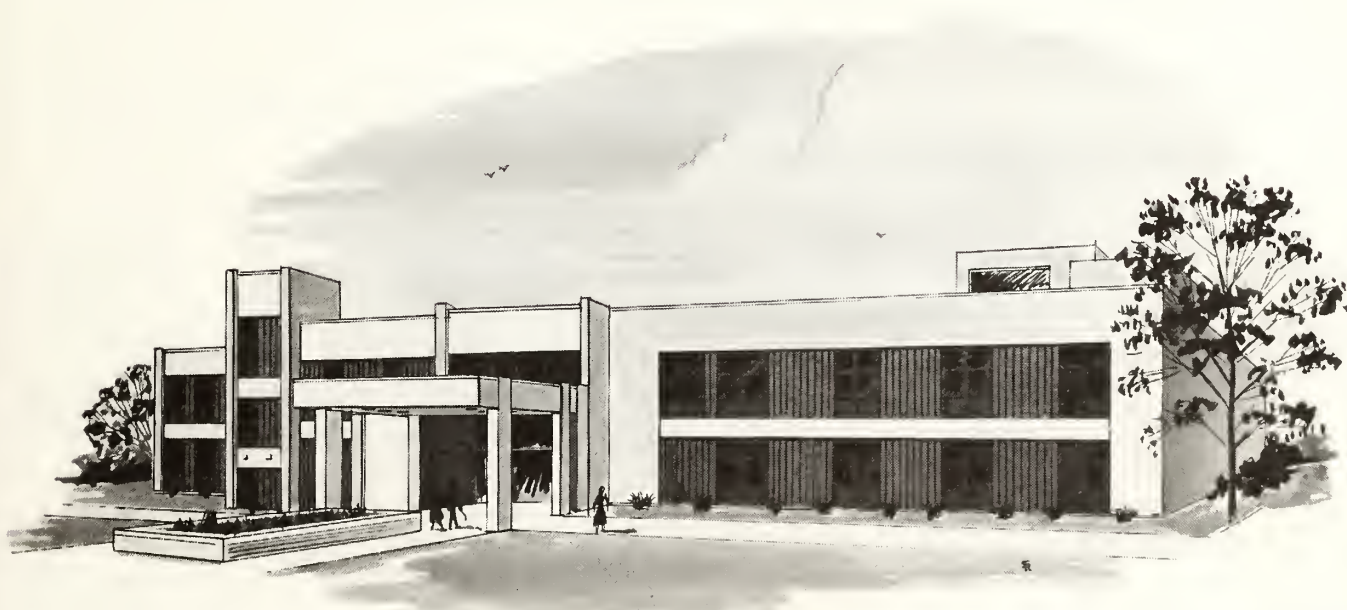
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YOUTHS AND ADULTS  
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Sands Point, NY 11050**

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**Operated by Helen Keller Services for the Blind**

**EDITOR — ROBERT J. SMITHDAS, L.H.D., Litt. D., L.H.D.**

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## EDITORIAL

## SHARING

By Robert J. Smithdas, LHD, Litt.D

In the last issue of NAT-CENT NEWS, we announced the publication of a catalog of assistive aids and devices, published by Deaf-Blind Services of the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB), which can be used by deaf-blind persons to attain a greater measure of independence in everyday living. Recently I received another catalog of aids and devices published by ICTA Information Center in Sweden.

This new catalog from Sweden covers a surprisingly large number of special and modified products that can be used by deaf-blind consumers, including signalling devices, light indicators, communication aids, travel aids, and many other items currently available from West Germany, Finland, Norway, Sweden, the United States, and other countries. Each item is briefly described as to the purpose for which it can be used, its



design and operation, and where it can be obtained. However, no price list is given, probably because of the constantly changing rates of exchange in international currencies.

Several of the products listed in this catalog were particularly interesting - a fever thermometer and an indoor-outdoor thermometer that vibrate, battery-powered travel alarm clocks with vibrators, and at least two telecommunication devices for using the telephone. However, with regard to devices that require electric power from household outlets, there would be a technical problem, because the power supply standard in Europe is 220 volts, while in the United States it is 115 volts, thus requiring modification of such devices or the use of special adaptors. Further, there would be the problem of repairing foreign-made products in case of malfunction or breakdown.

The ICTA catalog is impressive for its scope of tactile and vibratory devices which emphasize the needs of consumers who have

severe hearing and visual disabilities. In contrast, the CNIB catalog seems to have a greater proportion of products geared to the hard-of-hearing deaf-blind person, or one who has some useful residual vision, and more emphasis on computers and accessories.

But the real importance of these two new catalogs is their range of information for deaf-blind consumers. Not all consumers will find all the aids and devices useful, but the information is there, available in compact form. It is a means of sharing what is available here and now.

#### IN MEMORIAM: ANDERS E. ARNÖR

We deeply regret to announce the sudden death of Anders Emanuel Arnör, Honorary Secretary General of the World Blind Union, on November 28, 1985. Mr. Arnör died of a heart attack, and funeral services were held at Söderledskyrkan, Farsta (Stockholm) Sweden, on December 12, 1985.

Anders Arnör was highly esteemed and respected by his colleagues at the Swedish

Federation for the Visually Handicapped, and by the members of the World Council on Welfare of the Blind, the forerunner of the World Blind Union, of which he was Honorary Secretary General. An extremely intelligent, diplomatic, and dedicated man, Mr. Arnör worked for the welfare of the blind and deaf-blind on a worldwide level for more than twenty-five years and received many well-deserved honors. He was an excellent organizer and was responsible for arranging many successful international conferences, including the first three Helen Keller International Conferences of Deaf-Blindness. At the time of his death, he served as a member and consultant on the Committee on Activities of Deaf-Blind People of the World Blind Union.

Though not generally well-known to the deaf-blind population of the United States, he was admired and respected by deaf-blind leaders who knew him personally. Your editor, who is currently Chairman of the Standing Committee on Activities of Deaf-



Blind People of the World Blind Union, will sadly miss Anders Arnör's warm friendship, his wise counselling, and dedicated interest in the welfare of deaf-blind people throughout the world.

## HELEN KELLER

### DEAF-BLIND AWARENESS WEEK - 1986

The last week of June, 1986, will mark the third consecutive year of a national celebration of "Helen Keller Deaf-Blind Awareness Week." This year we will not seek another Congressional resolution as it is too costly.

HKNC has invited other agencies to join with the Center and spearhead a drive to encourage the planning of state and local activities and events from June 22nd through the 28th. Our goal is to promote an awareness of, and sensitivity to, all American citizens who are visually and hearing impaired, and thus focus attention on the needs and abilities of the deaf-blind population. Specifically, we hope this cam-

paign will result in a heightened awareness by potential employers and thus, increased employment opportunities, increased housing opportunities, and expanded delivery of services for deaf-blind people. We must reach out to the general public, governmental officials, legislators, parents, and professionals in varied fields - especially during this period of budget deficits and anticipated cut-backs in human services.

We ask all of our readers to participate! Here are several suggestions for translating ideas into action:

1. Write and call your Governors, Mayors, Town Supervisors, etc. Ask them to issue a proclamation declaring June 22 - 28 as "Helen Keller Deaf-Blind Awareness Week" and suggest a photo session.

2. Plan within your agency, and/or network with others, to hold special events during the week. This might include seminars; exhibitions at local libraries, post offices, town halls, etc; and award dinners or luncheons to honor an individual,

a public or private agency, a business or corporation, a media personality, or a service club that has been supportive of deaf-blind people, and/or has contributed in some way to extending or improving services for the deaf-blind population in your area.

3. Place advertisements and articles in local and city papers, newsletters, journals, etc.

4. Ask radio and TV stations to run Public Service Announcements.

HKNC will write and distribute radio Public Service Announcements, sample press releases, and suggested wording for proclamations. Posters and ads are being developed, but you could design your own or sponsor a poster contest with local high schools or colleges.

This year, HKNC's theme will focus on "Coming Of Age" - a transitional period for deaf-blind youngsters who are moving from youth to adulthood; from educational systems to training programs; from training to the workplace; from dependence to greater



independence; and from fewer opportunities for receiving services to expanded delivery of services.

HKNC is planning to hold two, half-day seminars at headquarters during the week of awareness. One will address the needs of Senior Citizens (who are beginning to lose hearing and vision) and their families, provide community resource listings, and present practical "how-to's" for daily living. The second will be geared to professionals in the community. A luncheon and award ceremony will recognize the Port Washington LIONS for their dedicated support of, and selfless service to, the Center and to its deaf-blind residents.

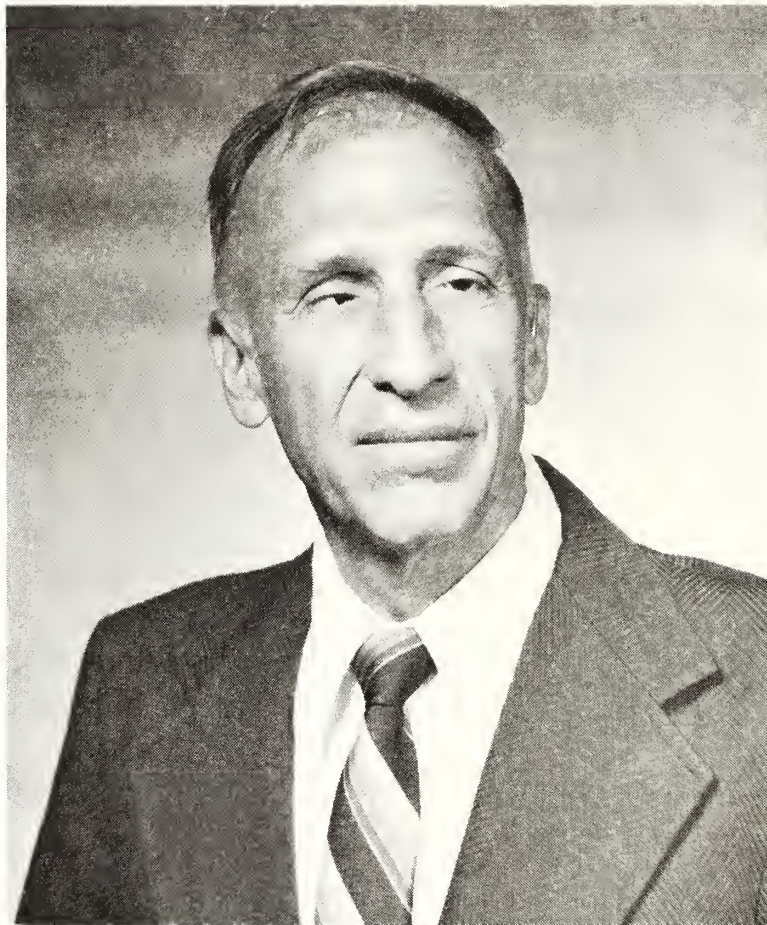
Since Helen Keller's birthday was June 27th, the last week of June will be celebrated during each future calendar year as "Helen Keller Deaf-Blind Awareness Week."

Now, let's share ideas, exchange information, and work together to ensure a successful AWARENESS campaign in 1986.

## CHALLENGE OF LIVING AWARD WINNER

JAMES MCNULTY

(Reprinted with permission of THE ORBIT, newsletter of The Hadley School for the Blind, Winnetka, Illinois).



Blind at age five and deaf at fifty, the winner of this year's Richard Kinney Challenge of Living Award is no ordinary man. James McNulty of Memphis, Tennessee, is an uncommon man with unusual courage and considerable insight into the human condition.

"Only days after the onset of deafness," he reports, "I began to fear that my mind and personality would disintegrate because of lack of communication."

"Of course, I could read braille - the libraries are full of braille books - but that alone wouldn't solve the problem. So I contacted Hadley and enrolled in 'Independent Living Without Sight and Hearing.' That course reminded me of the things I might do and reassured me about things that might be possible."

He adds that the course instructor, Geraldine Lawhorn, herself deaf and blind, encouraged him to learn new mobility skills and even to continue playing the piano.

"Back then, in 1973, with prayer, my family, a very good friend, and Hadley, I began to see that I could function in many ways."

And that is exactly what he has done. Jim is committed to a list of activities that puts many "Unhandicapped" people to shame. He is a lector at St. Teresa's Catholic



Church in Memphis, where he reads the scriptures at Sunday mass several times each year. At the Church, he also serves as an Eucharistic minister, one who assists with communion.

"Another interest of mine is doing something for or with the poor. Currently," he says, "I work in a soup kitchen on weekends. I have an exalted position there," he adds. "I am the dishwasher - and no, we do not have an electric dishwasher."

"I love music and I still play the piano. I am now back in the swing of daily practice. I do not hear pitch well at all, but I do discern rhythm, and I can sight-sing melodies so that I get the pitch line in mind."

Jim's main interest is his family. Three times a week he travels alone by bus to visit his mother, who has lain paralyzed in a coma for the five years since her massive stroke. He also talks with and visits his brother and two sisters.

The Hadley Challenge of Living Award

winner is involved in politics, too. "I am interested in good government - which I do not think we have at present." He writes letters to the President and his senators, and last spring he even participated in a march in Washington to advance his views on government policy.

The list goes on, with activities too numerous to mention here.

When asked what advice he would give to a blind person who is losing his hearing, he said, "Become a master of braille reading and writing and/or optacon. With your double handicaps these are your best sources of information and entertainment."

"The most important thing is not to give up on yourself," Jim explained. "Learn how to love yourself even with your severe handicaps and even with your failures. You must keep trying, reading, communicating with others - sighted, deaf, deaf-blind, strangers, friends, and acquaintances - to keep your mind open and able to make new decisions about where you want to go and how

to get there."

The Hadley School can be a great help to deaf-blind people, concludes Mr. McNulty. "It can be a sort of springboard that you can use to step out or spring out into a more fulfilling life in the world around you. It is a way of contact, of not allowing yourself to be isolated, or totally so."

Editor's Note: James McNulty was a former client of the Helen Keller National Center.

## LIGHTHOUSE BLAZES WAY FOR NEW LIFE

By Steve Bovey

(Reprinted with permission of the SEATTLE TIMES, Seattle, Washington).

Two years ago, Karolann Elliott spent most of her waking hours in a rocking chair.

That was her world. And when people tried to help her expand it, she would hit herself to show her frustration. Eventually, they would give up.

Today Elliott is gainfully employed, though she is mentally retarded, blind and deaf. The rocking chair is for resting,



not roosting.

Elliott, 26, has spent the past two years in a program at Seattle's Lighthouse for the Blind for people who are deaf and blind because their mothers contracted rubella during pregnancy. She has progressed far enough to help assemble hoses for hydraulic brakes. Though it is menial work lasting only four hours a day, the job represents a huge accomplishment.

Health officials from as far away as Mississippi recently visited the Lighthouse to hear and see how Elliott and others progressed from isolation to a paycheck.

"I wanted to see exactly what they were doing," said Marlene Stasulas, coordinator of a deaf-blind program in Chicago. "They are working on some clients who are very, very limited, but with their structured program, they are bringing them to higher levels."

An energetic Jackie Hyman, coordinator and one of three teachers in the Lighthouse's two-year program, has helped make the

program a national model. "I don't take no for an answer," she says.

Hyman, who has a master's degree in special education from the University of Washington, said making severely disabled clients simply understand the basic events of the day may take years.

"We go through it with them over and over," said Hyman, explaining how vocational and communication skills are taught to those with only two fully functioning senses.

During the 30 hours the clients spend at the Lighthouse each week, "we keep talking about what happens in the day," Hyman said.

Hyman joins hands with a client. They converse through the feel of sign language. The client understands a joke she cannot picture, feels laughter she cannot hear.

The program, which is funded by King County, has five people who are deaf and blind and, to varying degrees, mentally retarded. They all were born of mothers who had German measles (rubella) during the first three months of pregnancy. The virus

often is the cause of multiple defects in children whose mothers contracted the disease.

In the mid 1960's, an epidemic of German measles swept the United States, causing an estimated 30,000 stillbirths and 20,000 cases of severe birth defects, according to the National Centers for Disease Control. German measles has been largely stamped out since immunization began in the schools in 1969.

Many of the victims today are blind, deaf, and mentally retarded. All will be 21 soon, and thus no longer eligible for school services. Experts say adult programs that can serve the blind and deaf throughout the nation will soon be swamped with a wave of applications.

So, the Helen Keller National Center for Deaf-Blind Youths and Adults provided a grant that flew seven representatives from five agencies to Seattle's Lighthouse in hopes that they could further learn how to meet these people's needs.



Seattle is regarded as one of the best places in the nation for the deaf-blind for reasons ranging from the Lighthouse program to available public transportation. Hyman said two of her five clients ride the bus system independently.

The block-long Lighthouse at 2501 S. Plum Street, was founded in 1918. Today it continues its mission of providing employment to about 150 blind and deaf-blind Seattleites through production contracts with Boeing, the military, and others.

"Some of the workers in the machine shop make more than I do," said Hyman. The employees are paid according to how much they produce, and most of the work is assembly jobs.

Elliott pauses and feels the special clock by her station. Time for a coffee break.

"She loves coffee," says Hyman, who guides her to a coffee pot in the next room.

## BLIND, DEAF WOMEN PLAY PIANO

By Faith Bremner

(Reprinted with permission of the SPARKS TRIBUNE, Sparks, Nevada).

Two more different, yet very alike, women you could never hope to meet.

One of them grew up in Chicago, is well educated, is a teacher and is black.

The other was born in a small Colorado town, finished her schooling at the fourth grade, stays home with her family, and is white.

Yet the color of their skin, their ages, social and educational status mean little to Geraldine "Jerrie" Lawhorn, teacher, and Daisy Fleming, student, two fast friends, lovers of music and poetry and who are, by the way, deaf and blind.

Jerrie, who teaches poetry and rehabilitation classes to blind and deaf-blind students through correspondence courses at the Hadley School for the Blind in Chicago, and Daisy, who lives at Lake Tahoe with her daughter, were brought together again last

weekend at a picnic held at the Sparks home of Lois Baskerville, president of Northern Nevada Braille Transcribers, an organization of sighted people who transcribe books into braille, the raised dot writing system of the blind.

The women communicate by fingerspelling and palm printing into each other's hands, Jerrie favoring the finger alphabet used by the deaf, and Daisy preferring having the letters drawn by the "speaker's" index finger on the palm of her hand.



PALMPRINTS. Jerrie Lawhorn, left, spells words into the palm of Daisy Fleming at the Northern Nevada Braille Transcribers' picnic Saturday. Both women are deaf and blind.



Both of them can speak with their voices and communicate with hearing people using a combination of fingerspelling and speaking, and both of them are totally blind and deaf.

But it hasn't always been that way.

When she was five years old, Jerrie had a bad case of the measles and by age seven, she began losing her sight.

For awhile she was able to fake her way through school by memorizing and parroting what the other students said, finding the pages by counting them and turning them when she heard the others turn them.

"Then one day my mother asked me to read a letter that I had received and all I could see was a white page, so off to the doctor we went," Jerrie said in her soft monotone voice.

At age 12 she became hard of hearing, and by the time she entered the American conservatory of Music in Chicago at age 20, she had become totally deaf.

But during the years that she did have some hearing, Jerri took piano lessons and

gave recitals at Chicago area schools and churches.

"They put a carpet on the edge of the stage so I could touch the rug and know I was facing the audience," she said. "It kept me from going overboard."

In spite of her hearing loss, Jerrie kept up her music at the American Conservatory and studied drama and creative writing, and underwent speech therapy.

Jerrie, who laughingly refuses to give her age, was featured last February, and then again in June reruns, on ABC's "Ripley's Believe It or Not!" where she played the piano and demonstrated a device that enables her to communicate by telephone, and various techniques she uses in the kitchen to prepare meals, techniques she teaches to other blind people through the correspondence courses.

Daisy was one of those other blind people who learned from Jerrie to use her fingers instead of her ears and nose.

Born 70 years ago with poor vision that

gradually grew dimmer, Daisy was sent home by her fifth grade teacher because she could no longer see well enough to read.

When she was 33 years old, Daisy was completely blind, and, twelve years ago, the same year her husband died, she completely lost her hearing.

But her handicaps never got in the way of living a full and busy life, Daisy said, and her husband loved her all the more.

When they first dated, Daisy said he knew that she had bad night vision, but didn't realize how extensive her blindness was.

"I had a tumble or two before he knew that I really was blind," she said with a laugh.

"Even after I started to become deaf, we had a love affair that lasted almost 36 years," she said. "We have two beautiful children, five grandchildren and three great-grandchildren."

When her children were young and misbehaved, and she couldn't see well enough to know who was to blame, Daisy did like



sighted and hearing mothers everywhere - she spanked them both.

"When I saw that I was going real blind, I practiced washing the dishes looking away, out the window or something," she said. "I learned to do the floor on my hands and knees.

"You get a real sensitive touch."

Being deaf and blind is not the end of the world, Daisy said. "I wouldn't trade places with anyone in the world. I never said, 'Why me God?'

"He has given me friends I would have never had, people whom I've met at deaf-blind gatherings."

Like Jerrie, Daisy learned to play the piano when she could still hear and admits to playing now and then when no one is listening, even though she can't listen herself.

"I can't explain it," she said of her desire to play. "A good piano has vibrations and it gives back a pleasant feeling, a feeling of music."

At Jerrie's encouragement, Daisy writes poetry, published in braille for other blind people.

Although Jerrie said she too isn't angry that she is deaf and blind, she said she isn't without emotional feeling on the subject.

"There is an emotion," she said. "I feel isolated sometimes when I know that the group I'm with is singing and having a good time.

"It's a wistfulness, I guess, that I could get into it and be a part of it."

Editor's Note: Jerrie Lawhorn was a former trainee of the Ann Sullivan Macy Services program which was the forerunner of the Helen Keller National Center for Deaf-Blind Youths and Adults).

## FIELD NOTES

by Jules Coté, Associate Director

For nearly a year, the Helen Keller National Center has organized a series of regional meetings, eight in all, discussing

various aspects of deaf-blindness and the needs of the deaf-blind population. Co-sponsored by the Center's regional representatives and the staff of the Technical Assistance Center (TAC), these meetings have explored various aspects of work for the deaf-blind, including housing, support services and independent living, and interagency cooperation. The last of these meetings will be held in Kansas, some time in January, and will involve parents of deaf-blind persons. These meetings have been very important in raising public awareness of the needs of deaf-blind persons and the participants who have attended them have provided excellent feedback on their contents.

Due to conflicts of schedule, the Center's fourth seminar for State Directors, covering New England, New York, New Jersey, the Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico, has been rescheduled for June, 1986.

The Center's National Training Team (NTT) continues to be very active. In addition to planning monthly seminars at head-



quarters, it is scheduled to present programs in the following areas in 1986: January, Puerto Rico; February, Wisconsin; March, Utah and Oklahoma; April, Mississippi; and May, Pennsylvania.

The Helen Keller National Center has planned eight, week-long seminars for 1986, to be held on its campus at Sands Point, New York. We are including the following calendar of events so that interested persons may plan in advance and submit their applications if they wish to attend.

January 13-17, 1986; March 10-14, 1986;  
April 14-18, 1986; June 9-13, 1986  
(for Administrators, Regions I and II);  
August 11-15, 1986; September 15-19, 1986;  
October 27-31, 1986; December 8-12, 1986.

According to Marcia Powdermaker, the Center's placement specialist, two former clients living in New York are receiving on-the-job training for employment. One is a young woman being trained in upstate New York as a teacher's aide to work with

severely mentally retarded in developing their recreational and leisure skills. The other is a man being trained as a cabinet-maker, learning the trade at a cabinetmaking business on Long Island. His specialty will be the making of laminated furniture, which includes not only the building of cabinets, but also the installation of finished products in homes and businesses. Both individuals will receive training for three to six months with pay, after which the employers will decide if they have the necessary skills to be hired as regular employees.

Mr. Joseph McNulty, coordinator of the Center's affiliate program, has announced that two new specialists on deaf-blindness are now serving the states of Pennsylvania and Kansas. They are Mary Cay Stewart and Kathleen Spear. Ms. Spear is deaf-blind and was a former client of the Helen Keller National Center. They can be contacted at the following addresses: Ms. Mary Cay Stewart, Kansas Services for the Blind, 2700 West Sixth, Biddle Building, First Floor, Topeka,

KS 66606 and Ms. Kathleen Spear, Pennsylvania  
Blindness and Visual Services, P.O. Box 2765,  
Harrisburg, PA 17105.

DAVID GOLDSTEIN:

A LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

by Stacy Schneider

(Reprinted with permission of THE ADVOCATE,  
Stamford, Connecticut).

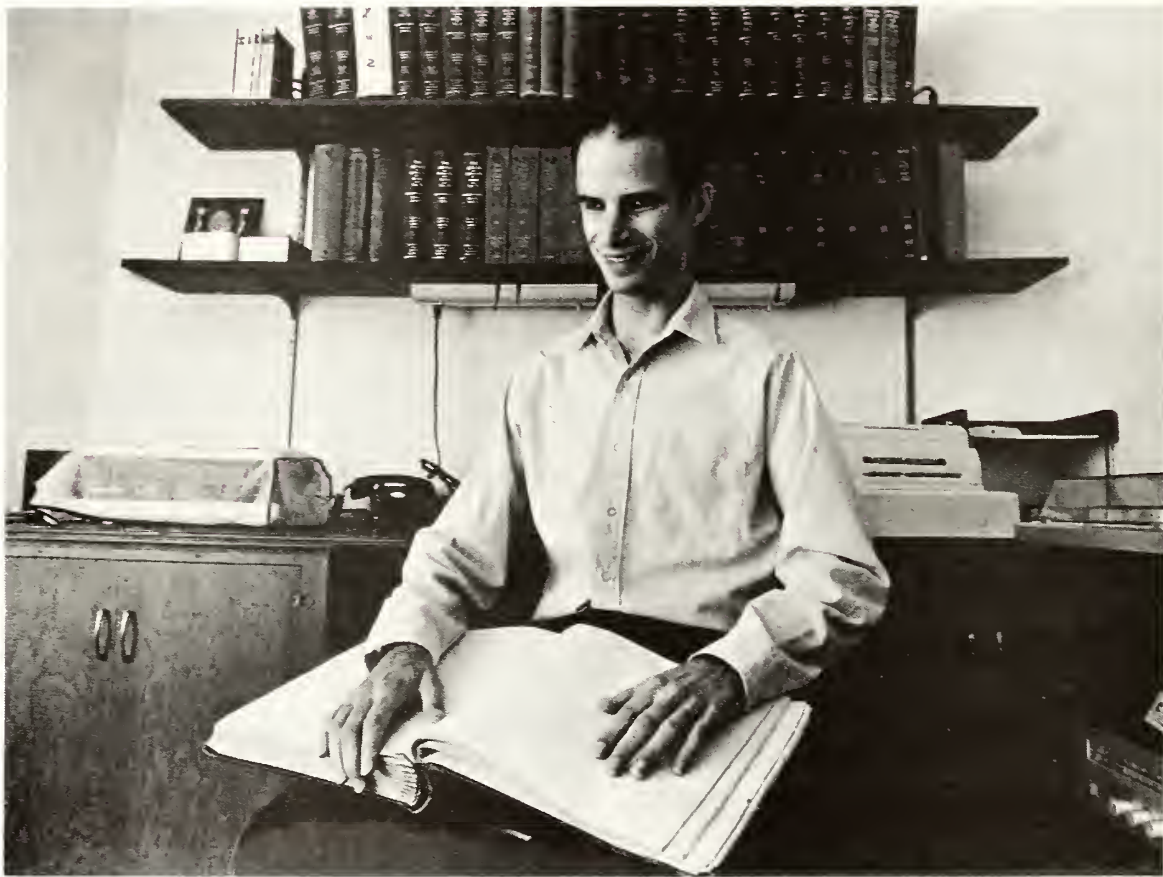
David Goldstein was 30 years old in  
October, 1985. He thinks he's fairly accom-  
plished for his age. He's read the classics.  
He understands, and at one time taught,  
Latin and Greek.

David worked as a radio writer and pro-  
ducer at the Connecticut Radio Information  
Service for three years and now edits audio  
interviews conducted by the Music Foundation  
for the Handicapped in Bridgeport.

Still, he never got the Ph.D. in liter-  
ature that he set out to obtain. And he  
would like to land a full-time job teaching  
literature or Latin.



David is blind and his hearing is severely impaired. But he doesn't blame his handicap for goals unattained. He expects a lot from himself and knows he has potential to be a good lecturer, teacher, writer.



David Goldstein touches the classics - and they, in turn, have touched him.

He quit the Ph.D. program at American University in Washington, D.C., and opted to go for a master's degree in literature,

not because it was too hard as a handicapped student, he says, but because it wasn't giving him what he needed.

With a Ph.D. David would have been trained to teach on a college level. And in classes larger than four, he has a tough time hearing everyone.

"When I set out to do something, I look for practical applications," David says. "I don't really think of myself as accomplishing things against the odds; that's really a stereotype."

David was born blind, as was his older brother, Howard. Both boys were born with full hearing, which deteriorated before they were teens. With a hearing aid, David can hear almost perfectly in a one-to-one conversation. Noises such as the humming of the refrigerator or another voice interrupts his hearing ability. Without a hearing aid, David can hear sounds no lower than a car horn.

Caryl Goldstein says that when her first son was born blind, various experimental

tests were conducted to try to trace and correct the problem. Neither happened.

She was also assured that if she had another child the chance was "a million to one" that the baby would be blind. When David was born with the same handicap as his brother, it was ruled a genetic defect.

Caryl and her husband, Melvin, were determined to bring up their boys to be independent and fulfilled. They became active in the Guild for Visually Handicapped Children and helped push legislation that allowed blind children to attend public school.

They were also instrumental in establishing a nursery school for blind children and recruiting instructors to teach the older children mobility and other skills.

"My biggest incentive has always been my parents," David says.

"They always made sure that my brother and I would have the equipment and resources so that what we wanted to do would be possible. We always had the opportunity to try.

"They showed us enthusiasm, but were also



honest about our abilities."

At 32, Howard has moved out of his parents' Stamford home and lives by himself in New Haven, where he works as a computer programmer for the telephone company.

David had lived alone in Washington for two years when he was studying for his master's degree and has stayed in hotels in Manhattan while he was taking a computer course at Baruch College.

He chose American University specifically because everything he needed was on the campus and within walking distance. The toughest part of being on his own, David says, is crossing crowded city streets.

If David knows someone is around he will ask for assistance. Because of his hearing problems, David cannot tolerate loud noises such as traffic and has to turn off his hearing aids on the city sidewalks. His lack of hearing proves more of a problem than his lack of sight.

"I just have to walk along the sidewalk and hope I am safe," David says. When he



gets to a corner someone usually asks if he needs help. But with the aids off, he can't hear. "Someone else usually just grabs my arm," leaving the person who offered assistance baffled and annoyed.

When David was learning to get around Manhattan on his own he was helped onto a bus by a man. David showed the man a card which said, "Please tap me on my shoulder when I get to my stop." David couldn't determine if the man saw the card. David's mobility instructor, who was following, told David the man was livid because he was talking and David didn't respond. That man was also blind.

Another time, David thought he grabbed his instructor's arm on a street corner. He grabbed the wrong person and was marched off in the wrong direction.

"It's one of those things that keeps you going," David says. "Everything becomes an adventure. You have to have a sense of humor.

"I could get along in the world having

people take me across the street, but it's not enough," David says. "My next step is to get a person to want to do more, to have a conversation with me, or even become a friend."

David believes people are afraid of blindness, afraid of the darkness. And he knows he will always be someone who is different, that he'll never be able to socialize like others his age. He can't go to bars or movies or concerts. Even being in a room with a lot of people makes his ears hurt.

But he wants personal contact. He wants to be able to teach others the classics, which he himself read in Braille. An attic full of books was transcribed for him by volunteers at the Connecticut Braille Association. He spent one summer at American University tutoring a student in literature.

David says he's a good lecturer and writer and wants to share his thoughts. During an interim year between high school and college, he taught a class on blindness

at the Barlow School in New York. Six teachers and one student, all sighted, took the class.

At the Music Foundation for the Handicapped in Bridgeport, David can combine his passion for music with his desire to work in the field of communications. David edits interviews produced for Cable TV. These interviews are packaged and sent to rehabilitation centers.

David praises the Music Foundation and says its show, "Cable Soundtrack" on Channel 34, has done a lot to dispel prejudice against the handicapped.

Right now his only problem is getting to Bridgeport three days a week. So, if anybody's going that way, give David a call.

Editor's note: David Goldstein was a former trainee of The Helen Keller National Center.



## TOUCHED BY LOVE

(Reprinted with permission of THE PITTSBURGH PRESS, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania).

by Jerry Vondas

Richard McGann never fails to amaze his wife. Although he's deaf and legally blind, McGann holds down a job, rides the buses, goes to school and even gets involved in shopping.

"Until I met Richard, I had never met a deaf and blind person," Karen McGann says. "I thought I'd be terribly uncomfortable."

She'd never had any trouble communicating with her brother, Jim, who is deaf.

"I had learned sign language when I was 14. But when a person is deaf and blind - that, I felt, was a real handicap."

Two years ago, she met her husband-to-be and quickly gained new respect for what the handicapped can accomplish.

"After meeting Richard, I learned there's very little difference in communicating with a deaf-blind person. The sign language is basically the same as with a deaf person.

The only difference is the signing is done in the palm of the deaf-blind person's hand."



Hands are key to communication for Richard McGann and wife Karen.

She met McGann, an employee of the Western Pennsylvania School for Blind Children, at a picnic at a friend's house in Gibsonia.

"Richard came with a male friend. They were holding hands. It seemed strange to me at the time. Then it was explained that Richard was deaf and blind and this was the only way he could communicate."

She says McGann took her to the Samurai Restaurant for their first date.

"By this time, I had learned enough about the covered-hand method so that Richard and

I could communicate. We discussed religion, politics, and talked about ourselves.

"It bothered me that night to have people staring at us. But as we began to date steady, I gave it little or no thought.

"Richard's not totally blind. He is blind in his right eye and has limited tunnel vision in his left eye. He has no side vision, but he can read a newspaper, watch TV through a giant magnifying glass, board a bus and go to work. He also attends a class in computers at the North Side campus of Community College.

"But to carry on long conversations, he finds it necessary to use the covered hand method of signing. He responds with regular hand signs."

Another method, Mrs. McGann explains, is the Tadoma method. "This is where a deaf-blind person puts his hands over the mouth of the person he is talking to and reads the lips with the thumb."

McGann also uses a TTY, which is a device attached to a telephone and similar to a



portable typewriter. He types his message and it appears on the TTY screen. Two TTYs are necessary to complete a call. Because he has limited vision, McGann can read the return message.

McGann, 32, who suffers from Usher's Syndrome, was born deaf and began to lose his sight at an early age.

"Doctors tell us that Richard could lose whatever eyesight he has in the left eye next month or in 50 years," Mrs. McGann says.

"Richard has always handled his limitations with a great deal of pride. He's proud of his accomplishments, which include holding down a full-time job as supply manager at the blind school. But he's never gotten used to a cane. He feels it labels him when he's out in public."

McGann, through his wife, tells this story: "One day several years ago, when I had a little more sight in my left eye, I decided to go downtown and take in a movie at the Warner Theater.

"During the movie, I dropped my hat. I



could see the screen, but I couldn't see about me. I need a lot of light to see what little I can see.

"I had to get on my knees and feel around. I grabbed a woman's leg. She slapped me across the face.

"She didn't want to hear that I was trying to find my hat."

The McGanns were married in June in St. Mary Church, Hampton, and moved into a house in Brookline. Even though he was in a strange environment, after having lived in Mount Washington most of his life, McGann was determined to use the buses on his own.

"He wrote the bus driver a note explaining he was deaf and had limited eyesight and would appreciate a front seat.

"The bus often is full and the driver asks other passengers to get up and give Richard their seat. I've heard from passengers who know us that there was grumbling on the bus when Richard took out a newspaper and started to read.

"They saw him reading and didn't under-

stand his limitations. Of course, now they all know him and there's no more grumbling."

Dr. Kenneth L. Garver of the Department of Reproductive Genetics at Magee-Womens Hospital says Usher's syndrome is genetic.

"These are recessive genes. Everyone carries seven or eight recessive genes in his body. When the Usher's syndrome genes from two normal parents match in the child, you have Usher's syndrome."

Garver says that in every 100,000 births, there are three with the syndrome. "At Magee, we have about one Usher's syndrome birth every three years." (The disorder was named in 1914 for Dr. C.H. Usher of the Royal Ophthalmological Hospital in London.)

Terry Carr, an administrative assistant in research at the Helen Keller National Center, Sands Point, N.Y., says there are about 25,000 people who have been identified as having Usher's syndrome in the United States.

"In Pennsylvania, we've identified 15. There are probably a lot more, but these

figures reflect the number of cases reported to us."

McGann's father, Paul, a retired truck driver, says they've tried to trace the syndrome back through the family's Irish, German and Italian roots and can find no one who has had it.

Paul McGann recalls what a determined little boy Richard was while attending DePaul Institute, a Catholic school for deaf children in Mt. Lebanon. "We bought Richard a set of encyclopedias. He read them from cover to cover."

For the past two years, Karen McGann has been a pastoral worker at the Catholic Office for the Deaf. I work as an interpreter. The deaf-blind person often needs an interpreter, such as in a classroom. I also make home and hospital visits and teach religion to the deaf."

At one time, Mrs. McGann says, deaf-blind people had very few opportunities. "Today, with the help of such organizations as the Helen Keller National Center for

Deaf-Blind Youths and Adults, deaf-blind persons are working as assemblers, computer programmers, hospital supply workers, librarians, Braille proofreaders and vocational rehabilitation counselors."

At the Helen Keller Center in 1973, McGann had classes in communication skills, orientation and mobility, daily living and home management, among others.

When McGann attends his weekly computer class at Community College, his wife goes with him and acts as his interpreter.

"I'm paid by Community College to act as Richard's interpreter. The college has a fund to pay such interpreters.

"Several years ago, Richard tried to attend Community College, but in those days there were no interpreters and he couldn't make it. Now he's working toward an associate degree in computers."

The McGanns want children. Asked if they're worried about Usher's syndrome showing up in their children, they say no.

"We understand it happens in so many



thousands of births," Mrs. McGann says, "but it really doesn't bother us. Richard and I have every intention of adopting one or two children who are deaf or blind and deaf. My brother wasn't born deaf. He became deaf after coming down with spinal meningitis. And here he is working in computer processing for Mellon Bank."

McGann recalls an incident in New York City. "I was sitting in a diner looking at a menu. I couldn't make up my mind. I kept reading the menu over and over. In the meantime, an armed robber came into the diner and told everyone to stick their hands up. I was reading the menu and, of course, I couldn't hear a thing.

"He kept shouting at me to stick my hands up. He was so angry with me that he didn't see the cook come out of the kitchen and pick up a chair. She was going to hit the robber over the head with it. I was told the robber turned around, saw the chair, dropped the gun, and ran out the door.

"The cook came over to me and said I was

very brave. I'm not brave. I just couldn't hear him."



Amy Richardson, Western Pennsylvania School for Blind student and McGann share thoughts.

## NEW FILM ABOUT DEAF-BLINDNESS TO BE RELEASED

A new 16mm color film "The World At His Fingertips", has just been completed by the Helen Keller National Center, and was pre-viewed October 30th by staff, Board and special guests in a private screening room at Warner Communications Inc., Rockefeller Center, New York.

This twenty-nine minute documentary,

produced by Roberts Productions, Riverside, Connecticut, and narrated by Jane Alexander, film actress, is a dramatic story about Mike Van Orman. Married, the father of two sons, Mike was employed by the "Ithaca Journal" in upstate New York, when he became deaf and then lost his sight as a result of kidney failure. The film reveals the feelings and frustrations of a deaf-blind person and traces Mike's path toward acceptance of the inevitable adjustments imposed by the limitations of a dark, silent world. Ultimately, Mike achieves a new and productive life as a teacher and mentor, a parent, a friend. Mike was originally a client at HKNC and after completing his training was employed as an Instructor's aide at the Center.



Mike Van Orman, featured in "The World At His Fingertips", converses with one of the guests at the screening.



The film was designed to create an awareness of deaf-blindness - the limitations, frustrations, and permanency of the double disability. It also depicts the fact that deaf-blind people have the capacity, as all people do, to experience joy, intimacy, humor, hope, and sorrow, and emphasizes the abilities rather than disabilities of deaf-blind individuals.

Within this one personal story (as in so many others) we see the HKNC as a catalyst for attaining new goals and for acquiring a life filled with dignity, equality, and as much independence as possible - in the community and in the work place.

Major funding for this project was secured through a grant from Warner Communications Inc., and from several other corporations, private foundations, and individuals.

"Life At His Fingertips" will be available by spring, 1986, for rental or sale on 16mm film, 3/4 inch video cassette, and VHS cassettes. An accompanying study guide suitable for use by schools, graduate



programs, agencies, and parent groups is being prepared by the Center. For further information please contact Barbara Hausman, Community Education Department, HKNC, 111 Middle Neck Road, Sands Point, N.Y. 11050 (516) 944-8900 (TTY and voice).



Jane Roberts, film producer (left), chats with Jerry Jamerson (right), former HKNC client who appears in the film. Lindy Jamerson, Jerry's husband, joins the conversation.

Mike Van Orman addresses the attendees at the October film screening at Warner Communications Inc., as Barbara Scalcione, Mike's fiancée listens and serves as interpreter.





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**NAT-CENT NEWS**

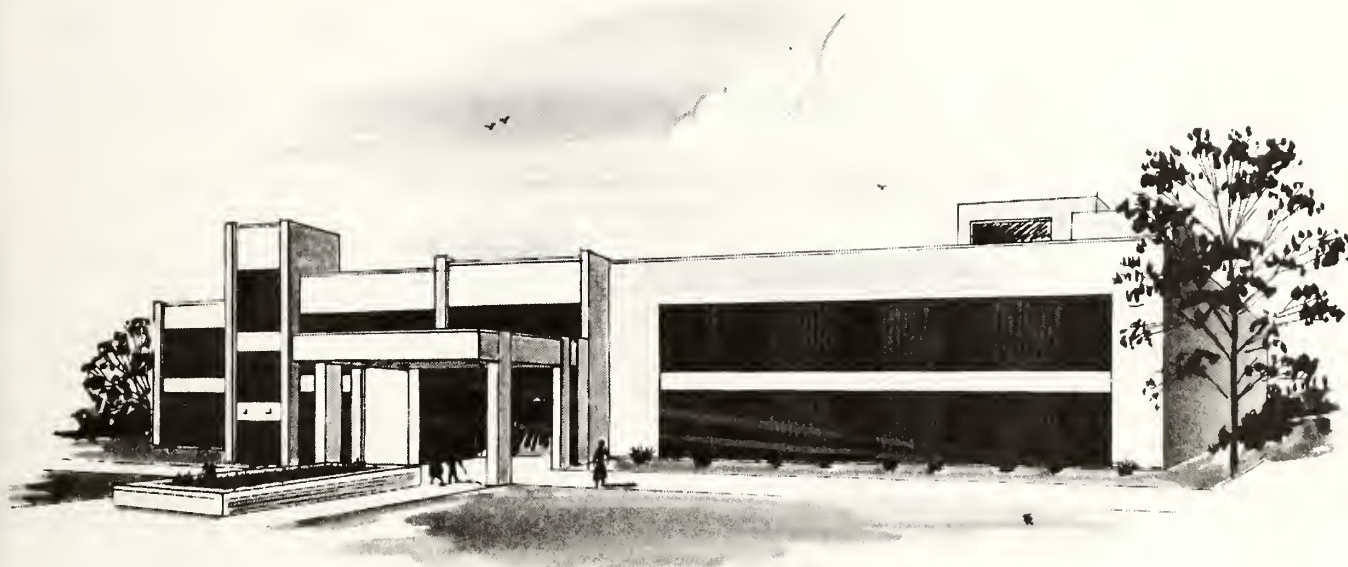
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EDITOR — ROBERT J. SMITHDAS, L.H.D., Litt. D., L.H.D.

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## E D I T O R I A L

## WHERE ARE THE DEAF-BLIND ADVOCATES?

By Robert J. Smithdas, LHD., Litt.D.

Recently this writer had an opportunity to review two agendas for conferences dealing with education and rehabilitation of deaf-blind people, and the unique problems peculiar to deaf-blindness. Both programs were comprehensive, covering a wide variety of topics, including transition from school to community living, housing, recreation and leisure-time activities, communication and the problems of independent living. The lists of speakers and panelists scheduled to make presentations were impressive, including experts from nearly every phase of human services.

The topics selected for discussion were excellent, but to this critical reviewer, both agendas had a glaring defect. Neither one listed a single deaf-blind participant.

In this age of insistence on human rights, which emphasizes consumer input and advocacy for minority groups, the failure

to include deaf-blind spokesmen on programs directly concerned with the problems and needs of the deaf-blind population is patently inexcusable. This is particularly true when one considers that the number of highly educated deaf-blind persons (those with college and university degrees), and other capable deaf-blind persons who are able to present and discuss issues has greatly increased. The proportion of deaf-blind individuals living independently has increased tremendously during the past thirty years. The American Association of the Deaf-Blind, which will be holding its eleventh annual national convention this year, has members who are articulate and knowledgeable concerning the wants and needs of deaf-blind people, including two state consultants on deaf-blindness.

Professional workers in the fields of education and rehabilitation are essential if service programs for the deaf-blind are to continue to grow and develop. But that is only one side of the coin. The other side

of the coin is that deaf-blind spokesmen and consumers should be included in discussions that directly influence the lives and well-being of the deaf-blind population, providing input from their personal experiences and intimate knowledge of the problems inherent in deaf-blindness.

Every major conference on deaf-blindness should include deaf-blind individuals as participants, advocates, and advisors. They have the expertise that comes from living with the problems that the loss of both hearing and sight creates, and they should be invited to contribute their knowledge.

#### AADB ANNUAL OPEN CONVENTION, 1986

The American Association of the Deaf-Blind will hold its eleventh annual open convention at Gallaudet College for the Deaf, Washington, D.C., June 22 - 29, 1986.

This year's convention is expected to be the largest to date, and application forms are available on request by writing to the AADB Office, 814 Thayer Avenue, Silver



Spring, MD 20910.

Fees for the entire week of activities are as follows: Members, \$200.00; nonmembers, \$220.00; observers who stay on campus, \$275.00; observers who live off campus (hotel, motel) but participate during the day, \$50.00. There is no charge for volunteers who agree to serve as guides and interpreters for deaf-blind participants during the week.

A full program of activities has been planned, including business meetings, various workshops, recreational outings, and tours to various points of interest in the nation's capital. There will also be exhibits, an arts and crafts show with awards, and a chess tournament. Highlight of the week will be the annual banquet, at which special awards will be made - the Peter J. Salmon Award for outstanding contributions to work for the deaf-blind; the Laura D. Bridgeman Award to an outstanding deaf-blind person; and the John J. Murphey Award to a person who has made outstanding contributions as a volunteer.

The theme of the convention will be

"ACCESSIBILITY: What? Why? Who? How?"

## FIELD NOTES

by Jules Côté, Associate Director

As of March 31, 1986, the Helen Keller National Center has a new regional representative serving its Chicago office. Ms. Sherri Wallace was formerly with the Iowa Commission for the Blind, where, for the past two years, she had been the Center's affiliate representative in Des Moines. Prior to this, Ms. Wallace worked for Deaf Services of the Iowa Department of Health. She holds a Master of Science degree in counselling from Western Oregon State College, Monmouth, Oregon, and a Bachelor of Arts degree in rehabilitation counselling from East Central University, Ada, Oklahoma. Ms. Wallace replaces Dr. William Goodman, who served as regional representative in Chicago for the past four years.



During the weekend of March 14 - 15th,

the Helen Keller National Center sponsored a workshop for parents of deaf-blind persons. This was made possible through the cooperation of the HKNC Technical Assistance Center and its regional representatives in Kansas City and Dallas. Participants came from the Rehabilitation Services Administration's Regions VI and VII, which cover Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Missouri, Iowa, Nebraska, and Kansas.

The Center's sixth annual meeting of affiliates will be held at its headquarters in Sands Point from May 20th to 23rd. This meeting will include a number of nationally recognized speakers who will discuss such issues as the impact of the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings Act on services to the deaf-blind. Other topics to be covered include supervised employment, community-based housing, and programs being developed for school-age deaf-blind students to prepare them for life after school.

Sister Bernadette Wynne reports that each year the Center's National Training

Team forges new frontiers. In the past, there have been many visits to schools for the deaf, with the focus on assisting staff and the parents of students diagnosed as having Usher's Syndrome. This year the National Training Team will be revisiting schools for the deaf and conducting assemblies for junior and senior high school students. Their response has been gratifying - they are interested, pay attention, and ask very good questions. Hopefully, these students will gain a better understanding of their fellow classmates who have Usher's Syndrome. On occasion, students mention family members with similar problems, and in a few cases, students were identified as having visual difficulties and were referred for testing. Mainstreaming programs for the deaf will also be included on the calendar this year.

### VersaNews

by David Goldstein

VersaNews, a quarterly magazine for VersaBraille users, is beginning its fourth



year of publication. It provides a forum for users around the world to exchange tips, VersaBraille applications, and information on braille and braille technology of interest to this consumer group. Topics have included bookkeeping with the VersaBraille, interfacing it with computers and other devices, and latest developments in the field of paperless braille. A "Letters" section encourages subscribers to write about the ways they use their machines and to ask questions.

Annual subscriptions in ink-print and VersaBraille (not audio) cassette format, \$20.00, \$25.00 for readers outside the U.S. and Canada. Checks should be made payable to VersaNews, and sent c/o David Goldstein, Editor, 87 Sanford Lane, Stamford, CT 06905.

Editor's note: David Goldstein was a former trainee of The Helen Keller National Center.

#### SPECIAL NOTICE

Deaf-blind residents of California, Nevada, and Arizona can now obtain a Tele-

Braille device from their local phone companies free of charge. Familiarity with Grade I Braille is important.

### MICROWAVE COOKING:

#### A CHOICE FOR DEAF-BLIND PERSONS

by Elizabeth Janson

Supervisor, Home Management Department

From time to time, some deaf-blind persons express their very realistic fears about being burned or starting a fire while using conventional methods for cooking. Families have voiced their concerns - justified or not - about the ability of the deaf-blind family member to use the stove safely. Sometimes lack of experience, age, or additional disabilities add more roadblocks to the deaf-blind person's wish to live independently.

The recent arrival of smaller, less expensive microwave ovens on the cooking scene has had a very positive effect on plans for independent living for deaf-blind persons, as well as for other disabled people. A few years ago, such ovens could cost up to

\$600.00 and people tended to think of them as luxury items. Today a good microwave oven with many desirable features costs between \$200.00 and \$300.00. There are, of course, ovens with all the "frills", which are more costly, and others that are small and of limited use that sell for less than \$100.00.

In the past, a recommendation that a client purchase a microwave oven because that would be the best way for him or her to cook was viewed as unrealistic. Fortunately, that attitude has changed. For those individuals who do not find conventional methods of cooking successful, a program using an alternative means of cooking has evolved. Though a microwave oven can be the only cooking appliance used, at the Helen Keller National Center it is used along with a sturdy toaster-oven-broiler and a Sunbeam Hot Shot.

Mr. Ronald Rode, who now lives in his own apartment in Chicago, was the first person involved in this program at the Center.

He was constantly amazed by the number of things that could be cooked by microwave. His most frequent comment was, "You can cook that in the microwave?" He added an electric coffee-pot to his list of appliances. "None of that instant stuff for me," he said.

Mr. Paul Rooney, while at the Center, participated in the Independent Living Experience. He used the three appliances very well. For coffee or tea, or any food items that required boiling water, he used the Hot Shot. Foods that needed browning, and some frozen foods, were cooked in the toaster-oven-broiler, but the majority of foods were microwaved. He used braille recipes to cook foods that he liked. He said, "Microwave cooking is easier than conventional cooking. It saves time, and I don't worry about burning myself. The food and the dish do get hot, and you must be careful about that; but the oven itself stays cool." He used a Space Saver oven, which was labelled for his use with Hi-Marks.



No article about microwave ovens would be complete without comments on safety.

Manufacturers say that microwave ovens are safe, and the Food and Drug Administration says that radiation is very small and within permitted limits. However, a few common-sense rules for the use of microwave ovens should be followed:

1. Don't try to operate the oven with the door open.

2. Make sure the door closes and latches tightly. Don't rest things on the oven door - this may damage the hinge.

3. Keep the inside of the door and the surface where the door closes clean.

4. Don't stand in front of the microwave oven while it is in operation, and don't let children stand in front of it watching the food cook.

5. A person who uses a pacemaker should consult his or her doctor about using a microwave oven.

If you have a microwave oven, follow the rules, use it often, and enjoy!

AVAILABLE OVERLAYS  
FOR MICROWAVE OVENS

Compiled by Kim Jackle

Assistant Instructor, Home Management

In October, 1985, the Home Management Department at the Helen Keller National Center began compiling a list of appliance manufacturers who supply braille overlays for their appliances, specifically microwave ovens. Letters of inquiry were sent to members of the Home Appliance Manufacturers. Their responses have been categorized and documented in the following list. Additional information will be added as it is received, and published in a future issue of NAT-CENT NEWS.

\* \* \* \* \*

Amana Refrigeration, Inc., Amana, IA 52204  
Tel. 319-622-5511. Overlays available  
for rotary dial microwave ovens only,  
\$25.00. Write to the following distrib-  
utor for details: Chapin-Owen Co.,  
Inc., Division of Wittenberg Distributing,  
Inc., 205 St. Paul Street, Rochester, NY

14604. Tel. 716-454-5100.

General Electric Company, G.E. Answer Center, Tel. 1-800-626-2000. Overlays available free for most G.E. and Hotpoint microwave ovens. Specify serial and model numbers.

Panasonic: Matsushita Appliance Company, 1 Panasonic Way, Secaucus, NJ 07094.

Tel. 201-348-7000. Company itself does not manufacture overlays but refers customers to Friedman's in Iowa - see below.

Quasar: Quasar Company, 9401 West Grand Ave. Franklin Park, IL 60131. Tel. 312-451-1200 or 312-625-0020. Company itself does not manufacture overlays but refers customers to Friedman's in Iowa - see below.

Sharp: Sharp Electronics Corporation, 10 Sharp Plaza, P.O. Box 588, Paramus, NJ 07652. Tel. 201-265-5600. Overlays available free for models R-4850, R-9450, R-1400A, and new models from 12/15/85. Sharp cookbook available for about \$40.00 from National Braille Association, 1290 University Avenue, Rochester, NY 14607.

Tappan: Tappan Appliances, T.E. Nixon, PR Department, 222 Chambers Road, Mansfield, OH 44901. Tel. 419-755-2011. Overlays available free with copy of sales slip for models 56-4274, 56-4474, and 56-4884. Tappan owners' manual available on cassette with overlays.

Whirlpool: Whirlpool Corporation, Appliance Information Service, Administrative Center, Benton Harbor, MI 49022. Overlays available for 1985 - 1987 models MW8500XR Standard, MW3500XR Compact, and MW1500XR Sub-compact. These models all have braille, large type, and audio kits available free to owners, and can be ordered at the time of purchase. Controls and manual can be transcribed into braille by Whirlpool's transcribing service.

\* \* \* \* \*

The following store sells 13 lines of microwave ovens with braille overlays if requested. They can also make braille



overlays for most current microwave ovens. Friedman's Microwave Ovens, 4060 Merle Hay Road, Des Moines, Iowa 50310. Attention: Mark Seiber.

\* \* \* \* \*

Following is a list of manufacturers who do NOT supply overlays for microwave ovens as of October, 1985:

Frigidaire: Frigidaire Parts-Service Co., 3555 Kettering Boulevard, P.O. Box 4900, Dayton, OH 45449.

Maytag: Maytag Company, Newton, IA 50208. Tel. 515-792-7000. Maytag has a method for making appliances easy for the visually handicapped to use. Write to Coordinator, Marketing Relations.

Toshiba: Toshiba America, Inc., 82 Totowa Road, Wayne, NJ 07470. Tel. 201-628-8000. Does not offer overlays, but claims their "touch control ovens lend themselves to easy braille markings by visually impaired."

## A DEAF-BLIND COUPLE WHO EMBRACE LIFE

By Jack Wilkinson

(Reprinted with permission of THE ATLANTA JOURNAL, Atlanta, Georgia).

They're gone now, bound for their Grand Rapids, Michigan, home that is nearly as remarkable as they are. But for five days recently, they were the presence of Christmas, touching the lives of Atlantans as few people can. They are Bill and Helena Merrill and theirs is a touching story.

They touch people's hearts and their hands - for that is how the Merrills communicate - with their hearts and hands. They must communicate through sign language, and must hold hands while signing. Bill and Helena Merrill are both deaf and blind. Yet they are as resilient as they are independent. "Of all the years I've known Bill," said his half-brother, Brewster Merrill, "I could count on one hand the number of times he's cried about his situation."

While visiting relatives here, the Merrills ate at Po' Folks, where Helena

enjoyed the Braille menu nearly as much as she did the deviled crab. They visited the Crusselle-Freeman Church of the Deaf. They even toured the High Museum in a preview of a special touch exhibit for the handicapped that recently opened. And on Christmas morning, Bill, 64, and Helena, 65, gave thanks for their most precious gifts - each other.



Bill and Helena Merrill were able to enjoy a High Museum tour through sign language and an interpreter, Don Clark (center).

There are approximately 40,000 deaf-blind Americans, said Martin A. Adler, Director of the Helen Keller National Center for Deaf-Blind Youths and Adults in Sands Point, N.Y. Ron Cyphers, the organization's regional representative based in Atlanta, said there



are 163 deaf-blind Georgians and nearly 1,000 in the southeastern United States, but no deaf-blind couples in the region.

Dr. Robert J. Smithdas of the Helen Keller National Center estimates there are perhaps 15 deaf-blind couples in the United States, including Smithdas and his wife. A deaf-blind couple is one in which both partners are functionally deaf and legally blind.

"Many deaf-blind people in the U.S. are put away in homes and they can't do anything," Bill said, signing through Don Clark, a freelance interpreter for the deaf.

"They're very lonely."

Indeed, Helena was very concerned while visiting the Crusselle-Freeman Church of the Deaf. She toured the church's home, where seven deaf people live in separate rooms, and clenched her hand into a fist and rubbed it over her heart, the sign for "Worry."

"She was concerned that they live by themselves," said Bill's niece, Nancy Merrill. "She feels sorry for them and they can see."



Once, Bill and Helena Merrill could both see. Both were born deaf, victims of Usher's Syndrome, in which congenital deafness is accompanied by a gradual loss of sight due to retinitis pigmentosa. The retina deteriorates and progressively narrows the field of vision. Helena is virtually blind now, and has been since the age of 48; she can only distinguish bright light.

While Bill is totally blind in his left eye and legally blind in his right, he still has some vision in his right eye. Five years ago, he was almost completely blind, but cataract surgery restored about 20 percent tunnel vision in his right eye. "If you'd hold up a paper straw," said Brewster Merrill, "and make it a little fuzzy, hang a little cotton over the end, that's what Bill sees."

What Bill never saw was his mother. She died shortly after childbirth. At 14, Bill was orphaned when his stepmother died of cancer, three months after his father died of pneumonia. Bill's failing eyesight precluded a career in photography, so he worked a lathe

and assembled band instruments in Grand Rapids. He married in 1948, but his first wife, a diabetic, died in 1955.

But in 1967, Bill recalled, "Life was pretty dull because I couldn't see anything. I thought I'd join a group of deaf-blind men in New York I'd read about." While living and working at the Industrial Home for the Blind in Brooklyn, Bill met Helena at the home's day center in Queens. Like Bill, Helena was lonely, and unable to work since 1959 because of her eyesight.

"She was smart and active," Bill recalled. "She could see a little bit at that time. We got along good and I asked her if she wanted to go back to Grand Rapids with me. I told her I have many wonderful friends there, it's a good place and living there is very easy."

"He was a very nice man, nice to me and sweet," Helena remembered. But she couldn't cook, shop or keep house. She had always been afraid of marriage and was hesitant to marry someone nearly as disabled as she was.

On April 25, 1968, though, Helena walked down the aisle, patting her palm quickly over her breast - the sign for "Happy."

"I feel very close to him," Helena said. "I like to do the work a wife should do because I love him so much. It can be a lonely life without a wife."

In Grand Rapids, the Merrills live in a unique apartment. Bill has rigged the doorbell so that when it rings, lights flash brightly in every room, bare floors vibrate and the beds shake. An alarm clock in the bedroom is also connected to the bed vibrator. A telephone call activates the lights and vibrators, but in a different pattern to distinguish it from the doorbell. The phone is connected to a Teletypewriter, on which Bill can send and receive messages on paper.

Bill has put Braille labels on everything. Helena does all the housework. At night, she'll read, play Braille Scrabble, write letters or talk to Bill when he isn't busy at his basement workbench. By day, they

can take the bus downtown by themselves, but their closest friends, neighbors Gil and Mary Branagan, always accompany them on their weekly trips to the supermarket, church and other errands. Gil, who is deaf, also serves as their interpreter each summer at the National Open Convention for the Deaf-Blind.

### NOW IN CALIFORNIA

We are pleased to announce the recent formation of the Southern California Association of the Deaf-Blind. The organization is a nonprofit, tax exempt club, made up of and serving deaf-blind persons. Its goals are to:

1. Provide social activities on a regular basis.
2. Offer peer counselling for both members and nonmembers.
3. Provide community education and involvement.
4. Provide workshops for interpreters for the deaf-blind.
5. Help to reunite the deaf-blind with the deaf community.



6. Help reunite the blind-deaf with the blind community.
7. To grow and provide needed services for the deaf-blind population.

Membership is \$12.00 per year on a January-December basis, and is prorated to \$9.00 in March, \$6.00 in June, etc. All membership fees and contributions are tax deductible. Checks should be made payable to: So. Calif. Asso. of the Deaf-Blind, and sent to: S.C.A.D.B., 842 N. June Street, Los Angeles, CA 90038. Further information can be obtained by writing to the address given.

## WENDELL BEAN IS COMING OUT OF HIS SHELL

By Sara Kempin

(Reprinted with permission of THE WICHITA EAGLE-BEACON, Wichita, Kansas).

Wendell Bean has never heard his mother's voice or seen the sky fade to pink at dusk.

He doesn't know how to make friends with someone his own age. Or that it's natural to laugh when he's happy.

For 22 years, he has lived in the dark world of the deaf-blind, unable to ask for chocolate milk at breakfast or tell the nurse he had a toothache.

A world where everyone moved faster than him. And rarely had time for hugs - the world of Winfield State Hospital and Training Center.

For 18 years, Wendell existed from day to day in the state institution, a victim of his times. Most choices - from the kind of haircut he got to how much butter went on his dinner roll - were made for him.

"It's an old story, the deaf-blind individual who's placed in a setting that's inappropriate because nobody knows how to communicate with him, or his parents have placed him there because they don't know how to deal with him," said Doug McJannet, an instructor at the Helen Keller National Center for Deaf-Blind Youths and Adults. "That's still true today about a lot of people, although it's happening to a lesser degree."

Yet Wendell's life is changing. New

federal laws, the perseverance of a social worker at Winfield, and luck have combined to get him out of Winfield. In December, he became the first Kansan from a state institution to be sent to the Keller Center.

Here, instructors will attempt to teach him the basic skills he needs to live a more independent life.

"He's coming out of his shell," said Kathy Kinney, Wendell's social worker at the Center. "And it's obvious he's a bright guy. He's got skills; they're there."

Wendell still has a limited sign-language vocabulary. He expresses his thoughts haltingly, hesitantly flashing his hands to make the signs for simple nouns and verbs. But now he's beginning to understand that if he makes certain signs together, he can get what he wants.

Last month for the first time, he pointed to a hole in his high-top sneakers and told an instructor through sign language that he needed to shop for new shoes. When he realized the instructor understood, Wendell



broke into an excited smile.

"Today with the shoes was something really incredible with him using sign language," said instructor Brian McCarroll. "But I had a feeling something like that was going to come around."



Wendell Bean hugs Brian McCarroll, assistant daily living skills instructor at Helen Keller National Center.

At age 4, Wendell was put in the Winfield institution because his severe physical disabilities made it impossible for his parents to care for him at home. His mother had been given an experimental drug to help her through the pregnancy, and doctors later said that's what caused Wendell's birth



defects.

His physical problems were immense. His esophagus was attached to his right lung at birth; the right side of his body was paralyzed; he was prone to seizures; he was mildly retarded, and his vision and hearing were severely impaired.

When the Beans put their son in Winfield, the doctors told them that he was not capable of being trained and had no chance for a better life. Winfield officials now know that prognosis was wrong.

"Twenty years ago, pediatricians and other physicians simply did not have the technology or concentrated research in the field of mental retardation that we've achieved in the last 10 years," said Gerald Hannah, a trained psychologist and state commissioner of Mental Health and Mental Retardation.

"Their only way of advising parents with how to cope with their son's/daughter's disabilities was to tell them to put them in an institution. Doctors today are just

better informed."

Indeed, Hannah and officials at Winfield say that if Wendell had been born today he never would have been put in an institution.

"He lived in a world of silence all his life," said Wendell's mother, Thora Bean. "He could not communicate, even though he was capable of understanding. It was a prison sentence, really."

Wendell Bean is 5 feet 8 inches tall and weighs 145 pounds. He has light brown hair, blue eyes, and a crooked Jimmy Cagney smile. His nickname at the Center is "Beanie," and he likes to wear sweats and dark blue high-top canvas sneakers. His face is red from acne, and he's growing a faint, blond mustache.

He has a little hearing in his left ear, and officials describe his vision as similar to "looking through a lens splotted with paint." Wendell squints constantly because his eyelids have been sewn under to prevent infections. He must have artificial tears put in his eyes several times a day. And

he uses two "quad canes" - canes with four prongs on one end - to help him walk.

Wendell's life began Feb. 19, 1963, at Axtell Christian Hospital in Newton, six months after the family moved to Wichita from Arkansas. When Wendell was 3, the Beans moved to a modest home in Belle Plaine, about 21 miles northwest of Winfield.

Both Beans now work in Wichita - Thora as a private nurse and Eddie for Cessna Aircraft Co. Photographs of Wendell and their five other children crowd the walls of their living room.

"When I was carrying Wendell, I had a lot of difficulty and was in the hospital a lot," Thora said. "Nature was trying to abort him, I guess because he was an imperfect fetus, but we fought against nature. They gave me a drug . . . Later, they said that's what caused his handicaps. But without that, I would have lost the baby."

Caring for a disabled child put a strain on the entire family, Thora Bean said, but being a nurse, she was determined to care for

Wendell at home.

"One time, our preacher told me: 'God only gives his special children to special people,'" Thora Bean said. "That made me feel special and glad for Wendell."

But the family doctor, who has since died, told Thora Bean she was exhausting herself caring for her son and should consider putting him in Winfield. Then, there were no other options.

Trying to decide whether to put Wendell in an institution was difficult, the Beans said. Twice they filled out admission papers but didn't follow through. Finally, they said, the doctor convinced them it was the only way.

"I thought I was having a heart attack when we finally went to take him," Thora said. "I couldn't swallow, I was so upset."

The family took Wendell to Winfield the day after his fourth birthday.

"We just resigned ourselves to the fact that he would be a vegetable his whole life, even though I always thought he could be



taught," Thora Bean said. "I still blame myself because I took their word for it too much. It's just that I'm a nurse, and I've always been taught you don't talk back to a doctor; you just do what they tell you."

Throughout the years, the Beans visited Wendell at least once a month, took him home for holidays and out on family picnics and gave the institution as much financial support as possible.

Officials say the family support Wendell got was good for him. But what he needed most was education.

That came after Congress passed a federal law in 1975, mandating special education for all handicapped children.

For the first eight years he was at Winfield, Wendell had received no formal education.

The new law led to a re-evaluation of Wendell, and he started attending the institution's Serendipity Special Purpose School in 1975, where he learned how to do simple, functional tasks such as tying his shoes.

In fall 1978, he began attending classes seven hours a day at the Cedarview School and started learning basic sign language. Then, he could see close-up objects well enough to make out the signs teachers were trying to communicate to him. His vision now is steadily deteriorating.

Once Wendell could communicate better, his teachers discovered that he had a quick mind.

But it wasn't until five years ago during a national push to remove as many disabled people as possible from institutions, that officials at the state hospital seriously began looking for a way to get Wendell out.

As a result of the push, new programs were financed in Kansas to set up group homes and train the more than 300 deaf-blind people in the state to live more independently, said Mary Gay Stewart of the Kansas Services for the Blind in Topeka.

"There are a lot of people in institutions in Kansas that would benefit from the

kind of training Wendell is getting," she said. "But it's just now with public laws and how they're changing that we'll have the funds to work with those people."

Specialists at the Keller Center predict that when Wendell leaves, he will be able to live in a group home and work in a special workshop for moderate pay. Winfield paid Wendell's \$2,000 testing fee, Vocational Rehabilitation Services in Wichita is picking up the \$110-a-week training charge, and the Keller Center contributes \$110 a week for room and board.

When he wasn't at school, Wendell lived with 68 other residents aged 12 to 21 in the peach-colored rooms of Unit C, passively doing what he was told and having most daily chores done for him, Winfield staff members said. Even when he wanted to talk, he couldn't because almost no one at the institution knew how to sign.

Following graduation from Cedarview in May, 1984, Wendell's training in sign language stopped because state training funds

are cut off when a person reaches 21. About 1½ years later, staff members began to notice a bewildering behavior change in Wendell. Usually cooperative, he stopped doing what he was asked and became belligerent.

"We ... decided that because of the lack of communication, there was a lot of frustration building up within him," said Terry Cooper, a speech-language pathologist at Winfield. "He was getting bored with some of his vocational programs so he just wouldn't do the work anymore."

So Cooper started teaching Wendell more sign language.

"He'd learned a lot of nouns in Cedarview ... but he had no vocabulary for emotions, so we worked with him on that," Cooper said.

In the meantime, another person had entered Wendell's life. Phil Rust, his social worker at the institution, had heard about the special Helen Keller school in New York at a conference in Topeka. And he decided Wendell should go. After consulting



state officials, Rust began the application process.

It took Rust two years to work out the details - visits by Keller Center staff and state officials, testing sessions for Wendell, and mountains of paperwork. Finally, in October 1985, Cooper and Winfield staff member, Charlene Mannon, a special friend to Wendell during his years in the institution, flew him to New York.

For the first 10 weeks at the Center, Wendell got training in sign language, mobility, daily living skills, and basic food preparation, said Maryanne Roberto, Wendell's rehabilitation counselor there.

He learned how to get to his classes by using a system of cards with symbols on them, each card representing a different class, McJanett said. Later, the card system was replaced by a sign system. Now he gets to class without being told.

Wendell learned so quickly during the trial period that at the beginning of December, his instructors recommended that he

receive 13 more weeks of training at the Center, Roberto said. Center staff will continue to recommend more weeks of training as Wendell progresses and expect him to be there at least a year.

Wendell is making such rapid progress that instructors are reluctant to predict how far he can or will go.

"...I honestly believe the potential is unlimited," McCarroll said.

Center instructors say that Wendell has "come alive mentally" since his arrival. His engaging sense of humor has garnered him many friends on the staff.

The instructors have compiled a long list of what they call "Wendell Bean stories" which they tell to demonstrate his success.

Instructors say they think the reason Wendell is progressing so rapidly is that he's determined to make up for lost time.

"He's got spirit, and I like to see that," Roberto said. "Maybe he can't show it in a verbal way yet, but it's coming through."

## A DAY WITH WENDELL:

## LEARNING TO COPE WITH WORLD IS NO. 1

7 a.m. Thursday, Jan. 9 - Laura Duran, instructor at the Helen Keller National Center goes into Wendell Bean's room in Peter J. Salmon Hall, flashes the lights and signs to him and his roommate, Steven, that it's time to get up.

Rising and shining is easier these days for Wendell than it was when he first got here in October. Then, Laura had to forcibly swing his legs over the bed to get him up.

The time it takes for Wendell to get ready in the morning has been cut almost in half since he arrived. He washes his hands and face, brushes his teeth, shaves with help, picks out his clothes and dresses himself.

"He has an incredible memory," Duran says. "It's the fastest I've ever seen a client progress since I've been here."

7:50 a.m. - Wendell takes the elevator up to the second floor to get medication from nurse Mary Ann DeCaro. He likes to play in

the elevator. More than once, instructors have found him riding up and down, a delighted smile on his face.

The elevator stops. Wendell heads into the tiny medical office where DeCaro is treating another resident. When she finishes she applies some antibiotic ointment to Wendell's eyes and has him hold a warm compress over them. He takes his daily medicine.

"He's had so much medical attention in the past, he tends to build a rapport with nurses and medical people," DeCaro says.

8 a.m. - Wendell goes downstairs for breakfast. His favorite friend at the Center, Brian McCarroll, comes in and begins teasing him. Wendell loves it.

8:45 a.m. - Breakfast over, Wendell gets up to leave. McCarroll notices the zipper on Wendell's pants is broken. So they ride the elevator upstairs together so Wendell can change.

Wendell puts on brown pants; McCarroll tells him to put on his coat and hat. But Wendell signs that, first, he wants a belt



for his pants. As McCarroll puts the belt around him, Wendell gives him a bone-crushing hug. "Ahhh, Beanie," Brian replies.

9 a.m. - Wendell heads out, wearing a brown hat, blue coat and blue shoes. He walks with quad canes, and he makes noises of exertion as he moves. He throws one cane then the other in front of him. He brings his feet in to meet the canes. It takes about five minutes for him to make it the couple of hundred feet from the residence to his industrial arts class.

9:05 a.m. Wendell hangs his coat in the locker room next to the classroom and heads inside. He sits down by himself at a long table and begins putting plastic knives and forks into bags.

"We found out that Wendell had a great deal of manipulation difficulty with handling small parts," says industrial arts teacher John Spainer. "So now, we have him working on simple tasks."

He's learning attention to a task and basic work habits like how to be able to sit

at a desk for a period of time and work.

9:35 a.m. - Next Wendell goes to the Communications Learning Center to work one-on-one with instructor, Alex deBellegarde. She shows him a picture of money and takes out some coins and a dollar bill so he can see "real money." Then she has Wendell sign the word for money.

Tomorrow the instructors will take about eight students shopping and to the deli for something to eat, so she wants to work on Wendell's understanding of money and the concepts of large and small. "Wendell works best with pictures or manipulations," she says. "At first, he communicated by grunting, by using eye gaze. Now, he's very much naming things by sign. He's starting to get the concept that he can communicate by connecting names."

10:35 a.m. - Daily living skills instruction with McCarroll begins. Today, Wendell and McCarroll will play a game called Connect Four where two players try to see who can line up four of the same color chips

in the plastic board first. The exercise is meant to help Wendell understand the concept of "four."

Before McCarroll has a chance to start the game, though, Wendell signs "shoes" and points to a hole in his high-top. McCarroll takes his shoe off. There is a flurry of signs. "Tomorrow. Drive. Store. Shoes."

They agree that tomorrow on the shopping trip, Wendell will get new shoes. McCarroll wants to start the game, so he signs to Wendell to put a red piece on the plastic board. "What color? Red? Black? O.K. go ahead," McCarroll says. "What are you doing? Turkey. Wait, Brian's turn ..."

Wendell's close to getting four in a row, but he makes a wrong move. Finally, he puts in a piece that makes four. "Wendell, Wendell, you've got four," McCarroll says. "One, two, three, four."

12:15 p.m. - Lunch. Wendell sits alone, intent on eating.

1:15 p.m. - Wendell heads back to Industrial Arts. Now, he's working on

stuffing mimeographed sheets of paper into manila envelopes. "He's producing something," Spainer said. "It doesn't look like much, but for Wendell it's a great accomplishment."

5 p.m. - Dinner.

5:45 p.m. - His time is his own. He goes up to his room, washes up a little bit and changes his shirt. Then he heads down to the lounge. He sits down and watches the television flash, even though he can't hear what's being said, picks up some blue Play-Doh and starts working it through his hands.

"Wendell does not initiate communication with many of his peers," said Residence Director Sara Woolf. "He does with the staff, but not with people his own age. So after dinner, he'll play with a lot of tactually oriented games, puzzles and arts and crafts by himself."

10 p.m. - Wendell hits the sack.



## DEAF-BLIND SERVICE CENTER OPENS

A Deaf-Blind Service Center has opened in Seattle, Washington.

The Center came into being after two years of effort by many individuals and groups, including members of the Washington State Deaf-Blind Citizens; members and friends of the Deaf-Blind Task Force; and agency representatives from the Department of Services for the Blind, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and the Division of Developmental Disabilities. The Deaf-Blind Service Center (DBSC) is currently being funded by the latter three agencies for the first year, September 1985 to September 1986.

The DBSC has an excellent staff including director Laurel Poullisse, deaf-blind specialists Ellie Savidge and Patrick Cave (a former HKNC client), and deaf-blind specialist-office manager, Wendy Reed.

The Center's primary emphasis will be on addressing the needs of deaf-blind adults and their families by making referrals,

providing information, and helping to coordinate the efforts of other agencies. Any person who has - or will have - a significant loss of sight and hearing can seek services. Deaf-blind persons 16 years of age and older will be the primary group served. The DBSC will answer questions of deaf-blind adults and their families, such as: How much does a TeleBraille cost, and where can I buy one? Where can I get help finding a job? Where and how can I find housing? It will also provide information regarding social events each month.

Another important function of the DBSC is to act as the single central entry point for deaf-blind persons by assisting them in locating and receiving appropriate services. These services could come from a variety of state and/or community agencies. The DBSC recognizes that the needs of the deaf-blind cannot be met by any single agency. Thus, it will require a multi-agency approach. To develop this approach, the DBSC staff meets with various agencies to become

familiar with each agency's criteria. It will then facilitate referrals to the appropriate agency or agencies.

As a part of this process, the DBSC will document the service gaps it finds as it assists a deaf-blind person. This will be key information for future planning.

Due to limited funding, the DBSC will concentrate its efforts in the greater Puget Sound area during its first year. The staff is available statewide for telephone consultation.

To understand the functions of the DBSC, it is necessary to also understand what the DBSC will not do. The DBSC (1) will not duplicate services provided by other agencies; (2) it will not purchase/pay for equipment for deaf-blind people; (3) it will not be a job placement agency; and (4) it will not solve all problems.

## THREE DEVICES FOR THE DEAF-BLIND

Three excellent devices are currently available that could be very useful to deaf-blind people.

A battery tester that vibrates and emits a low-pitched buzzing sound is capable of testing all types of batteries - AA, C, D, and 9-volt flat radio batteries. The tester is a small, oblong case with a single wire and probe extending from its surface. To test an AA, C, or D battery, the negative end of the battery is placed over a screw on top of the case, and the probe is touched to the positive end of the battery. If the battery is "alive," there will be a distinct vibration.

To test a 9-volt battery, the two terminals of the battery are placed over a set of two screws, and if the battery is active, the case will vibrate.

The battery tester is available for \$20.00, plus \$1.50 shipping and handling, from Option Central, Fred Sanderson, Proprietor, 1604 Carroll Avenue, Green Bay,



WI 54304.

The Vibraphone is a flat, battery-powered device into which a small, round, powerful vibrator can be plugged; the vibrator is then placed under a pillow or mattress. An ordinary braille alarm clock can then be set and placed on the Vibraphone. When the selected time for rising has been reached, and the alarm rings, it sets off the vibrator for as long as the alarm sounds, awakening the sleeper. The Vibraphone will operate for a year on three C batteries, and is excellent as a wake-up signalling device when travelling, or where there is no easily accessible outlet for plugging in an electric clock. Vibraphone, made by SRF in Sweden, is available from ZYGO Industries, P.O. Box 1008, Portland, OR 97207.

The Silent Pager is an extremely compact signalling device which consists of a small lightweight receiver which can be worn on the wrist of the user, and a battery-powered transmitter about the size of a pack of cigarettes. The transmitter can be placed

near a telephone, or mounted on a door or doorbell chime with velcro. When the telephone rings or the doorbell rings, the transmitter sends out a signal which is picked up by the wrist receiver, which then vibrates. The units have test buttons to test whether they are operating. There is also available a "call" transmitter with which one can signal to another person wearing the wrist receiver. Items can be ordered separately - for example, two wrist receivers if there are two deaf-blind members in the family, or one deaf-blind and one deaf member - and all units can be coded to receive the same signals. For deaf persons, the wrist receiver is available with a light signal rather than the vibrating signal.

The Silent Page System, with one transmitter and one receiver, is priced at \$388.00; the manual, or "call" transmitter, is \$169.00. Further information can be obtained by writing to Quest Electronics, 510 South Worthington, Oconomowoc, WI 53066.

## USHER'S SYNDROME FAMILY LEARNING VACATION PROGRAM

A Family Learning Vacation (FLV) for families with children who have Usher's Syndrome or a similar dual hearing-vision impairment is being offered this summer at Gallaudet College from July 26 - August 1.

Since its inception eight years ago, the FLV has emerged as a most unique opportunity for families to come together and share experiences, questions and concerns related to Usher's Syndrome and the future of their children. The week long schedule of activities includes seminars on genetics, adolescent development, communication, education, parenting, psychology and resource availability throughout the country. The Usher's Syndrome FLV professional staff is comprised of nationally renowned experts in the field of hearing-vision impairment, many of whom come to Kendall Green exclusively for this FLV. Audiological services and educational evaluations are available for the deaf child upon request.

Family outings to historical landmarks in the nation's capitol and other recreational activities will augment the FLV's focus on family interaction. And, while adults are participating in scheduled seminars, trained teams of teachers, aides and recreation support staff will supervise youngsters engaged in their own educational/recreational activities. Families can also enjoy a variety of campus activities during their week-long stay at Gallaudet. These include swimming, tennis, handball, racquetball, and bowling.

The cost of the Family Learning Vacation is kept as low as possible. The fee includes room, board, and program activities and is less than \$150. per person. Some scholarships are available. As spaces are limited, early application is encouraged. If you should have any questions regarding the FLV, contact the Family Learning Vacation, Gallaudet College, 800 Florida Avenue, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, or call (202) 651-5541/TDD or 651-5542/Voice.



## AIDS FOR THE DEAF-BLIND

"Aids for the Deaf-Blind" is a catalog containing descriptions of 35 technical aids for deaf-blind people, published by the ICTA Information Centre, Sweden.

The aids presented in the catalog are currently commercially available in the Nordic countries, and many of them originate in other countries. The aids have been selected according to the criteria that neither sight nor hearing are necessary to use them.

The aids are described according to their functions and expected usefulness, and include technical specifications. Each aid is illustrated with a photo, and the address of the manufacturer or supplier is included.

This publication of 71 print pages can be ordered from the ICTA Information Centre, Box 303 S-161 26 Bromma, Sweden. A braille edition is also available. The price is \$20.00 for print or braille.



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EDITORIALTHE DEAF-BLIND POPULATION:GROWING AWARENESS

by Robert J. Smithdas, LHD, Litt.D

Nearly forty years ago, information about the number of deaf-blind persons in the population of the United States was practically nonexistent. Only one major agency - The Industrial Home for the Blind in Brooklyn, New York - offered any sort of formal training and employment program for deaf-blind individuals. The Industrial Home's program, inaugurated by Dr. Peter J. Salmon, began in 1925 with just two deaf-blind men - one of whom is still living. It was Dr. Salmon who established the first formal program of services for the deaf-blind in 1945, which became known as the Helen Keller Services for the Deaf-Blind within the metropolitan New York area.

By 1955, The Industrial Home was serving around 150 deaf-blind men and women in its service area, which included the four

counties of Long Island. But in the United States as a whole, very few professional workers or organizations were aware of deaf-blindness and the problems and needs of deaf-blind citizens. It was not until Congress established the National Center for Deaf-Blind Youths and Adults, which opened in June 1969, that a national register of deaf-blind persons was begun.

During the past three years, the last week of June has been proclaimed Helen Keller Deaf-Blind Awareness Week. Many of the states have started efforts to discover and serve deaf-blind citizens within their jurisdictions, and today it is becoming increasingly apparent that there is a larger population of deaf-blind Americans than was previously known or suspected.

For example, during the past year the Helen Keller National Center has added 806 new names to its national register. In a recent article that appeared in the SCRANTONIAN, a newspaper from Scranton, Pennsylvania, it was announced that 600 deaf-



blind persons were living in Pennsylvania. The state of Utah has begun a formal program for the deaf-blind and estimates that there are at least 300 persons who are deaf-blind. These are only a few instances where numbers are being tabulated, but they indicate that there is an ongoing need to find and serve deaf-blind Americans throughout the country, providing them with the education and training that can assist them to live wholesome, useful lives.

How many Americans are deaf-blind?

Back in 1978, R. Dean Wyrick, then Supervisor of Field Services for the Helen Keller National Center, and I asked the United States Bureau of the Census if it would be possible to include on the census questionnaires a question regarding secondary disabilities, which would have made it possible to obtain accurate statistics regarding deaf-blindness. The Bureau did not feel that this could be done. But the number of deaf-blind individuals known to agencies is growing, and

with the increasing number, there is an urgency to provide the kind of services that will lead to independent, productive lives for those deprived of sight and hearing.

### SPECIAL NOTICE



The Board of Trustees of the Helen Keller Services for the Blind (HKSB) has announced a reorganization of HKSB effective August 1, 1986.

Martin A. Adler, MSW, ACSW, current Director of the Helen Keller National Center for Deaf-Blind Youths and Adults, (HKNC) in Sands Point, New York, has been named acting President of the Helen Keller Services for the Blind. In this new position, Mr. Adler will be responsible for all operations of HKSB, including the Helen Keller National Center.

The reorganization plan includes a review and a reevaluation of the overall service delivery system.

A Search Committee of the Board of Trustees is in the process of interviewing candidates for the new position of President of Helen Keller Services for the Blind.

Helen Keller Services for the Blind, formerly IHB, was founded in 1893 and provides comprehensive services through its diverse programs for blind and visually impaired individuals, as well as deaf-blind youths and adults, in several sites throughout Long Island and Brooklyn.

### TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CENTER

by Nancy O'Donnell, Project Coordinator

The Helen Keller National Center's Technical Assistance Center (TAC) has completed its first year and a half of operation. The purpose of TAC is to provide technical assistance to agencies to help them develop



services for deaf-blind students who are completing their educations. These students are now 21 or 22 years old - many are graduating this June - and will need places to live and work. Some students will require job training. Group homes and apartments must be opened. Staff must learn how to work and communicate with deaf-blind people.

TAC can help by providing consultation and training for agencies that are developing work, living, and recreational opportunities that (1) are integrated into the non-handicapped community, (2) encourage each deaf-blind individual to attain his/her highest level of independence, and (3) provide activities that are appropriate for someone his/her age.

Over the past year and a half, TAC has received about 150 requests for assistance from agencies across the nation. Most agencies have requested information and assistance in developing group homes and work sites for deaf-blind youth. TAC also sponsored eight



regional workshops across the country to provide training on topics ranging from psychological services to parent training.

FUTURE PLANS: TAC has another year and a half remaining on the project. We will continue to provide assistance to individual agencies and programs, as requested. We are also planning to publish several resource manuals for use by professionals in the field. TAC will be working more closely with parent groups, who continue to advocate for their deaf-blind sons and daughters. We will also be working with the various state agencies to help them develop coordinated services for their deaf-blind clients.

If you would like to request technical assistance, or would like more information about our project, you can write to us at HKNC/TAC, 111 Middle Neck Road, Sands Point, NY 11050.

### FIELD NOTES

By Jules Côté, Associate Director

We have some very good news for readers!

The Helen Keller National Center now has raised alphabet cards available. If you want one, please send \$2.00 to cover handling costs for each card ordered. We also have a new model of the Tactile Speech Indicator available at \$20.00 each. This new model should prove to be better, as well as one-third the cost of the older model. It can also be used with an AC adaptor. Inquiries should be directed to me.

In August, we held a conference for deaf-blind persons in Baltimore, Maryland, and another conference is planned for Oregon in September. Another special conference scheduled for September is the Native American conference. These three meetings are being jointly sponsored and planned by the Center's Technical Assistance Center, its Regional Representatives, and several interested agencies. For further information on future conferences, please contact the Technical Assistance Center at the Center's headquarters

in Sands Point, New York.

During the busy summer months, the Center participated in several major meetings, and it was a pleasure to meet many dynamic individuals. At the American Council for the Blind convention in Knoxville, Tennessee, 64 persons showed up for a meeting on retinitis pigmentosa, though only a small group had been expected. The meeting was organized and chaired by Dorothy Stiefel of the Texas Association of Retinitis Pigmentosa, Inc., and many Usher's syndrome folks attended. We expect a very active interest group to attend the next meeting in Los Angeles, scheduled for next year. If you have questions on this subject, address them to Ms. Dorothy Stiefel, Texas Association of Retinitis Pigmentosa, Inc., P.O. Box 8388, Corpus Christi, TX 78412.

The Center's Regional Representatives were very active this year in promoting the national Deaf-Blind Awareness Week during the week of Helen Keller's birthday at the end of



June. The Center's affiliate groups also played a major role in making the public aware of the problems and needs of the deaf-blind citizens in their communities. Many agencies and interested groups participated in this year's Awareness Week throughout the country.

TIM SHERRIE LOOKS AHEAD

(Reprinted with permission of THE DENVER POST, Denver, Colorado).

by Jay Grelen



Tim Sherrie, left, grins as his father displays one of his paintings. In back are sister Debbie, 19, mother Mary Ann, and Kristen, 11.



His words come from the tips of his fingers instead of the tip of his tongue. Neither the song of birds nor the bark of his dog intrudes upon his world of silence.

Tim Sherrie was born this way, the genes of his parents combining to render him deaf.

As he grew, another circuit shorted. Tim began tripping over his younger sister and toys that were in plain sight. His parents knew something wasn't right, but the doctors couldn't detect the problem. Teachers called him restless, accused him of daydreaming.

But Tim was losing his sight. In his early teens, a doctor diagnosed retinitis pigmentosa, a disease that damages the retina. Tim had been born with Usher's syndrome, the doctors finally realized.

Tim Sherrie, now 20, is deaf and legally blind - one of 112 Coloradans known to be without both hearing and sight. Finding and helping the "deaf-blind" is difficult, say health officials. The gradual loss of sight

often goes undetected, even by the victims. Some reach adulthood before they recognize - or admit - their vision has diminished.

The 112 cases of deaf-blind in Colorado is a low estimate, says Susan Olson, Regional Representative of the Helen Keller National Center.

Denver and the state of Colorado declared June 22 - 28 as Helen Keller Deaf-Blind Awareness Week - and Olson hopes the publicity will help health officials find and assist more of Colorado's deaf-blind.

She also hopes the week will raise awareness of the problems encountered by the deaf-blind.

"For a deaf person to lose his vision is one of the scariest things in the world," Olson says. "There is a lot of ignorance. People are unaware of what the possibilities are."

A recent study found 38,000 deaf people living in Colorado - and experts say 3 percent of any deaf population has Usher's

syndrome. Colorado probably has at least 1,000 deaf-blind with that affliction, Olson estimated. The official state register shows only 25 people with Usher's syndrome.

Her estimate of 1,000 cases of deaf-blind do not include those who are deaf-blind through accidents. Still others are victims of the mid-1960's outbreak of maternal rubella which left 6,000 newborn Americans without sight or hearing.

This year's awareness week emphasized "Coming of Age," focusing on the transition of the deaf-blind after they finish school. Officials want the deaf-blind to know all available services.

Sherrie graduated this spring from the Colorado School for the Deaf and Blind in Colorado Springs. His limited field of vision (a 10-degree tunnel) is corrected to 20/20 with glasses.

Sherrie must look directly at an object to see it. He is taller than his mother, Mary Ann, who sometimes must tap him so he'll

know she is in front of him. The dog has learned to stay out of his way.

He talks with his hands and arms. On the back deck at the family's Littleton home, Olson and Sherrie's parents interpret his words.

"Some of the kids teased me," Sherrie says. Even those who were deaf didn't understand as his sight deteriorated, and he ran into things. "I tried to explain what it is like. I showed them with examples," he says. "Some understand now."

Classroom time was tough. "I had a hard time following lectures. I would miss a lot of the information," he recalls.

When the doctors diagnosed the trouble, he "felt bad, but I tried to go ahead with life," Sherrie says.

In the fall, Sherrie will attend Gallaudet College in Washington, D.C., a school for the deaf. He plans to start each day with a vibrating alarm clock placed under his pillow. He sometimes uses a cane for the blind.



Last summer, Sherrie spent eight weeks at the Helen Keller National Center where he learned more about how inherited genes robbed him of two senses.

"I feel more O.K. now. I wonder. I think. I'm a little afraid about going to college in the fall."

His parents say Sherrie rarely allows his limitations to interfere with his desires. He wrecked his sister's bike trying to ride it; he broke a leg riding a skateboard.

He has learned to control disappointment about things he can't do.

## A MODEL PROGRAM TO DETERMINE THE NEEDS OF DEAF-BLIND PERSONS

The Deaf Resource and Communication Center together with the Lighthouse for the Blind in New Orleans prepared a program to enable deaf-blind persons to investigate techniques for increased community participation. With cooperation from the Independent Living Center and the Louisiana Acadiana Deaf-Blind

Citizens, this program became a course titled "Successful Self-Reliance - Making the Most of Yourself."

The first step was to identify deaf-blind persons residing in the metropolitan New Orleans area. It was determined that there were twenty individuals who were deaf, blind or significantly visually impaired, and whose primary means of communication was American Sign Language. These individuals were informed of the course and invited to participate.

The Deaf Resource and Communication Center then provided in-service training to prepare Lighthouse staff members for serving deaf-blind persons. Instruction included proper use of sign language interpreters. Blind staff members experienced by touch the process of communicating through American Sign Language.

Jointly, the Lighthouse and the Deaf Resource and Communication Center devised a pretest questionnaire to determine partici-

pants' knowledge of specific areas including mobility, braille, living skills, resources, and coping procedures. This test was repeated at the end of the six weekly seminars to gauge progress made.

The Lighthouse provided both location and basic training staff to conduct classes in mobility, braille, and living skills. The Independent Living Center handled the topic of resources. The Louisiana Acadiana Deaf-Blind Citizens dealt with the topic of coping and problem solving skills. All class materials were provided in large print or braille format prepared by the Lighthouse.

Deaf-blind participants received one-to-one, in-hand American Sign Language interpreting. Voice interpreters were provided for blind Lighthouse staff members. Everyone, therefore, had total communication access. Some of the one-to-one interpreters were deaf persons, a system that offered the additional benefit of interaction between deaf and deaf-blind persons. These interpreters were

provided by the Deaf Resource and Communication Center through an Adult Education grant for the state of Louisiana, Department of Education.

This project involved six weekly seminars approximately 90 minutes in length. In addition to the above mentioned topics, participants discovered braille, braille writers, slate and stylus, braille labelers, and tactilely marked appliances for cooking, etc. Question and answer sessions were provided near the end of each class throughout which participants learned to make full use of Sign Language interpreters within group discussions. A coffee social was held after each session, providing a great deal of interaction and sharing among all participants.

A maximum of five deaf-blind persons participated in this pilot program. Their interest and enthusiasm was most encouraging and gratifying. Factors reducing participation are believed to be lack of transportation combined with reluctance on the part of deaf-



blind individuals to participate in community activities which are typically communication inaccessible to deaf-blind persons.

Where do we go from here? Plans are being made to offer the program again in the fall, and to offer follow-up classes in the specific areas indicated on pre- and post test questionnaires. There was interest in all topics with two areas of special note: Class activities found to be most helpful were sessions on mobility, and sharing coping experiences.

Suggestions for future classes were:

1. Have deaf-blind persons explain about their own life experiences.
2. Provide simulation activities to learn how to control eating, walking, talking, etc. while blindfolded.
3. Provide training lessons in travel, cooking, crafts, sewing, braille. Also provide training in use of braille typewriters, and in braille writing.
4. Deaf-blind people need to learn to

use the TDD in the event of emergencies - such as to contact the Fire Department.

5. Provide more activity than just talk/lecture.

6. Lectures and information should be presented slowly in order for deaf-blind persons to follow one-to-one interpreters.

As the word is spread within the deaf-blind community, it is felt that this program will see an increase in attendance. Deaf-blind persons represent an all too often neglected segment of our community. It is hoped that with accessible, cooperative learning opportunities, deaf-blind individuals will enjoy increasingly successful active, informed, and self-reliant community participation.

For a copy of the pre/post test questionnaire or additional information, contact: Lawrence E. Fontan, Community Outreach Coordinator, Lighthouse for the Blind, New Orleans, LA 70118. Phone: (504) 899-4501, or Heidi L. Reed, Administrator, Deaf

Resource and Communication Center, 721 St.  
Ferdinand Street, New Orleans, LA 70117-7395.  
Phone: (504) 949-4413.

### MICHIGAN UPDATE

(Reprinted with permission of THE DETROIT  
NEWS, Detroit, Michigan).

by Tom Wickham

LANSING - When Gail Newlin plugged her ears and covered her eyes, it wasn't to play "hide and seek" with her daughter Donna. Instead, Mrs. Newlin wanted to sense the world Donna has lived in for nearly 24 years: the world of the deaf and blind. "It was very unnerving," Mrs. Newlin said. "You never push a blind person - you lead them."

In 1968, Donna, a childhood victim of encephalitis, which left her deaf and nearly blind, went to the Michigan School for the Blind. By 1983, diabetes and glaucoma destroyed her remaining sight.

Donna continues to excel despite the setbacks. The fact she is allowed to roam the school grounds unaided is testament that

her sense of direction is unhindered by her handicap.

"She can be stubborn," Mrs. Newlin said. "But basically, she's a very happy person. She's not touched by the sadness of the world."

Of the 86 students attending the school, 23 are classified deaf-blind. Most of them are victims of the national rubella epidemic of the 1960's that left some 6,000 children deaf and blind.

Ted Beck, Supervisor of Special Education Services in the Michigan Department of Education, said there are 147 deaf-blind people in the state, including those at the school.

In recognition of the efforts to educate the deaf and blind, President Ronald Reagan declared June 22-28 "Helen Keller Deaf-Blind Awareness Week." The state Board of Education issued a similar resolution in May.

Helen Keller, born June 27, 1880, was stricken with a serious illness that left her deaf, blind, and unable to speak at the



age of 18 months. Under the direction of Alexander Graham Bell, the Keller family hired Anne Sullivan, a teacher for the deaf.

Ms. Keller learned to read and write braille fluently and eventually to speak. She graduated from college at age 24 and became a noted author and lecturer on the problems of the handicapped.

Today, specialists follow Ms. Sullivan's footsteps, helping the deaf-blind to refine their motor skills, learn to read and write braille, distinguish objects by touch, and negotiate a room unaided.

"It's a very small, small world," said Beverly Johnson, a deaf-blind consultant at the Michigan School for the Blind.

Under the guidance of residential care assistants and teachers, the deaf/blind are taught to use their fingers to "feel the world," Ms. Johnson said.

For example, one child sifts through a box of grain to retrieve plastic parts. At another table, a boy moves his hands from

left to right across a board with pegs to develop pre-braille skills.

Although their handicaps hinder their ability to talk, the deaf-blind often can express their emotions by laughing, crying, flailing their arms or stubbornly refusing the orders of a school worker.

Yet, the closest form of communication is through touch. By employing American Sign Language, teachers are able to communicate the most vital words and thoughts.

### FUN AND FROLIC FOR JULY FOURTH

by Madeline Cohen, Assistant Instructor -  
Horticulture, and Ann Morales, Assistant  
Instructor - Arts & Crafts

On July third, the clients and staff at the Helen Keller National Center participated in an all-day picnic to celebrate Independence Day. Events included relay races, a visit by the North Shore Animal League, a nature walk, a signing clown, ice-cream making, a piñata, arts and crafts, and music. A

variety of foods were served at lunchtime, many of which were prepared by the clients. Members of the staff also contributed by bringing their own special delicacies.

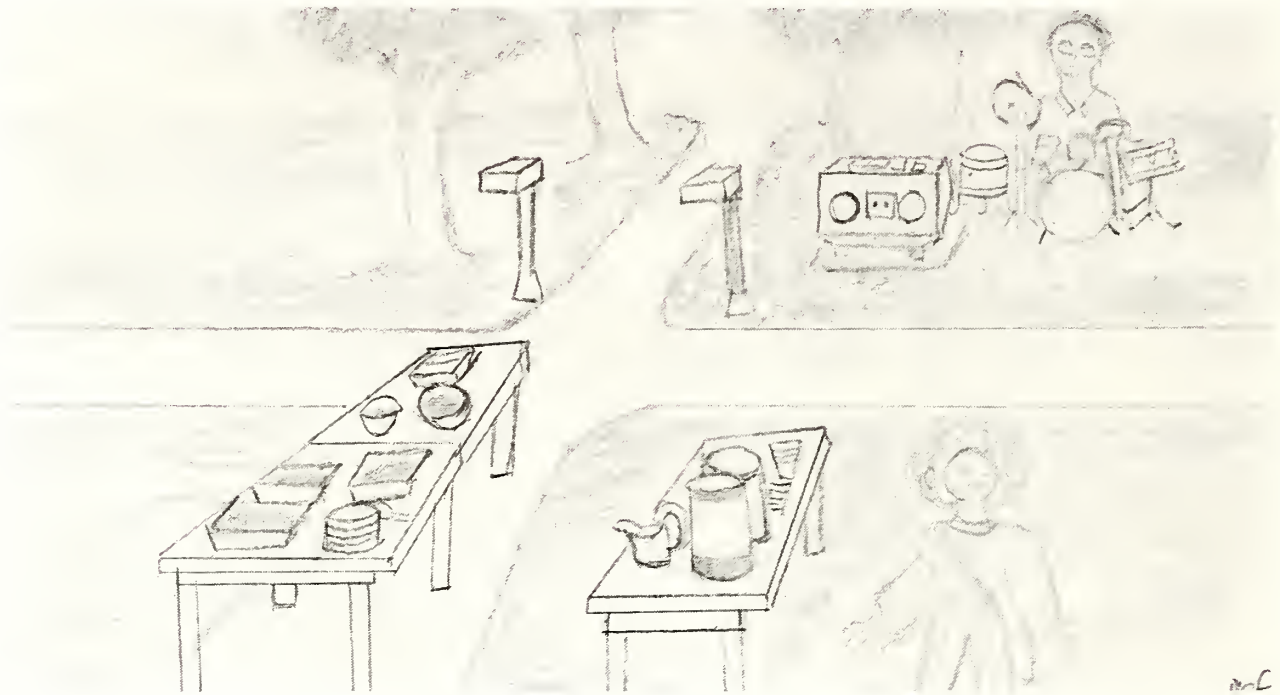
Though everyone enjoyed the day's festivities, clients had their own preferences. Here are some of the clients' feelings about the picnic:

"July 3, 1986, was a terrific day. I played ball, run, looked at clown, and ate hot dog. I miss two dogs. They were cute, white, and soft. Maybe next year dogs visit again."...Kristine Carbone

"What I enjoyed about the July third picnic - I enjoyed the games, the food, and the puppies. But most of all I enjoyed the nature walk. It was very exciting to see parts of the grounds that I've never seen before." ...Joe Ann Jackson

"Picnic July 3, 1986 - Sands Point weather was windy and sunny. We involved here outside field between Residence and

training school for picnic Independent Day.  
We raced with balloon burst and cookies.  
We raced sat down balloon, cookie stack,  
and potato on the spoon."...Scott Bass



Because of the group effort by clients and staff, the day was a wonderful success! Everyone is anticipating that next year's holiday picnic will be just as much fun and just as eventful.



SUCCESS

by Ron Cyphers

## Southeastern Regional Representative

A young tobacco farm worker from Irving, Kentucky, has completed his search for a new vocation at the Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind's Industries for the Blind. Gary Worrell grew up working on his father's farm in Kentucky, but a bilateral sensori-neural hearing impairment and advancing retinitis pigmentosa made it increasingly difficult for him to be successful in the rural farming environment.

Gary began his formal education at the Kentucky School for the Deaf and was introduced to manual communication, which was to become his primary mode of communicating. Following graduation from the Kentucky School for the Deaf, Gary worked with his father on the tobacco farm; however, he was forced to seek an alternative vocation at the age of 24 due to his decreasing vision and subsequential inability to perform previously routine farm

duties.

The Arkansas Enterprises for the Blind accepted Gary for personal adjustment and for vocational evaluation that following spring. In Arkansas, he became proficient with braille and also received vocational training in small engines. Gary's goal at this point was to complete his vocational training and return to Kentucky and his family as a small engine mechanic for his father.

Gary did return to Kentucky and his family; however, there was a need in him to associate with other deaf-blind individuals or those who communicated with manual signs. This need became increasingly important to Gary and it could not be fulfilled solely by his family in Kentucky.

Gary's sister telephoned the Helen Keller National Center for Deaf-Blind Youths and Adults' Regional Office in Atlanta, Georgia, to ask about available resources because she was very much concerned about Gary's health and well being. He appeared to be very

depressed and unhappy and feeling very isolated because he had only his family with whom he could communicate. Therefore, she and her family and Gary would be as she said, "very willing for Gary to move to an area where he could have friends with whom he could socialize, communicate, and share." Gary could communicate with manual sign language but very few people in his home community in Kentucky could use the manual sign language.

The Regional Representative telephoned agency persons in Kentucky at the Department of Mental Health, and discussed with them the various resources that might be available to Gary. A possible solution was offered to Gary. This suggestion was followed up by the Kentucky Department for the Blind. Communication was initiated between the Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind - E. H. Gentry, and the Kentucky Department for the Blind concerning Gary. An evaluation was recommended to determine his potential for employment at the Alabama Industries for the Blind.

This evaluation was made during his participation in work adjustment classes at E.H. Gentry. These classes are designed to develop and enhance work skills, behaviors, and attitudes to equip each client with traits that employers deem necessary in addition to appropriate vocational training. Within 3 months, Gary had exhibited above average performance in these three areas; therefore, he was promoted to the extended training program. Gary was elated at this promotion and expressed it with his broad smile.

The extended training program he participated in was a direct result of continuing cooperation between The Alabama Industries for the Blind and the E. H. Gentry Technical Facility. This is a relatively new program and is designed to provide participants with live work experiences. The possibility of future employment is present but not guaranteed.

The supervisors at the Industries were delighted with Gary. He met all their



requirements for an employee and again within 3 months, Gary was promoted to a full-time employee.

His close ties with his family still exist and will continue to exist; however, he no longer resides with them nor relies on them solely for interaction. He now shares an apartment with a sighted roommate who is also deaf and fluent in manual communication.



Gary Worrell works on an order from the U.S. Department of Defense at his station at The Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind's Alabama Industries for the Blind.

At last, Gary's needs for camaraderie with others who communicate with manual signs has been filled. At last, Gary's desire to be a productively employed individual has been met.

The above story would not have been possible without the cooperation and interaction between all of the involved agencies and

individuals. Our hats are off to Gary Worrell for his perseverance; to his family for their undying support and understanding of their son's needs; to the Helen Keller National Center's Regional Representative, the Kentucky School for the Deaf, the Arkansas Enterprises for the Blind, and the Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind for their formal education and training of Gary; to the Kentucky Department for the Blind and the Alabama Vocational Rehabilitation Association for their continuing work with handicapped individuals; and to all other individuals including teachers, friends, supervisors, and medical personnel who played an important role in this story of success.

### ROBOT HAND CONVEYS SIGN LANGUAGE

(Reprinted with permission of HEALTH SCENE, Columbia, Maryland).

A robot hand that conveys sign language to persons who are both deaf and blind has been developed by mechanical engineering students at Stanford University.

Capable of communicating at two words a minute, the hand consists of five fingers - including an opposable thumb. The unit is controlled pneumatically from a microprocessor which converts commands sent electronically to the fingers, using the ASCII computer code.

The deaf or blind person holds the robot hand and "reads" what the hand is saying. Anything sent in ASCII, including foreign languages and data transmitted by telephone, can be understood by the robot.

Words are entered into the machine through a computer keyboard. Future versions could accept electronically coded information from a variety of sources, says Charles Buckley, acting Assistant Professor of Mechanical Engineering at Stanford.

Southwest Research Institute, San Antonio, originated the idea for the robot hand as an alternative to TeleBraille, a device that converts electronic code into raised braille dots. Training individuals who are



deaf as well as blind to use TeleBraille is difficult, thus the need for an improved system.

Tests at the Helen Keller Institute, Oakland, California, demonstrated that people can read the robot hand after only 10 minutes of training.

The National Institute of Handicapped Research funded development of the robot hand.

### CATHY McKEON DEALS WITH DOUBLE HANDICAP

(Reprinted with permission of THE LONG ISLAND CATHOLIC, Hempstead, Long Island, N.Y.)

by Nancy Dwyer

Sands Point - Teens have a lot to deal with; a lot of growing up to do; a lot to learn. But when a teen is already severely handicapped, then develops an additional handicap during teen years and has to learn a new array of skills, it would seem a discouraging burden for a kid to carry.

But Cathy McKeon carries it well. Cathy is 21 years old and she attacks whatever tasks



she has with vigor and enthusiasm and a cheery optimistic spirit.

Cathy was born deaf. She commuted from Flushing, N.Y., to attend the Mill Neck Manor School for the Deaf. She started having difficulties in school. No one knew what the problem was until she was diagnosed as having Usher's syndrome. This begins with deafness at birth. During adolescence, vision gradually decreases. Whatever hearing the person had is also lost during the teen years. Today, Cathy is legally blind as well as profoundly deaf. She still has a bit of vision but knows that she must prepare herself for the day when even that has left her.

Besides academic difficulties, her new handicap posed personal problems for Cathy. Students at Mill Neck sign very quickly, and Cathy could no longer follow rapid sign language or group conversations in sign. And sometimes, too, her peers were uncomfortable around her, unsettled by the fear that so often puts up social barriers around the

handicapped: "That could happen to me."

Since Cathy is a very sociable, outgoing person, this hurt - very much!

Mill Neck officials referred her to the Helen Keller National Center four years ago. Center personnel began by inviting Cathy to a summer session at their Sands Point campus for evaluation.

Cathy recalls that it was a relief. "I could talk with the people here. We were on the same level, shared the same problems," and various aids were available to make it possible for her to communicate. "She blossomed during that summer," says Miriam Schmitt, Supervising Social Worker.

The Center sent specialists to prepare Mill Neck educators for Cathy's needs. They explained about the need for proper lighting and sharply printed reading materials. They had the teachers don special glasses to let them view the world as Cathy sees it.

The Center taught Cathy mobility skills, gave her academic reinforcement in English

and math, and taught her the braille she will need increasingly in the years ahead.

MICHELLE SMITHDAS: AN INSPIRING TEACHER.

Student and teacher are almost head-to-head, intent on the lesson. Cathy is using the Perkins Brailler, and the lesson today is to learn some of the 200 contractions used in braille. Her teacher is Michelle Smithdas, wife of Robert J. Smithdas, the deaf-blind Director of Community Education at the Helen Keller National Center.



Michelle Smithdas and Cathy McKeon share a joke during Cathy's braille lesson.



Michelle herself is deaf-blind and an excellent role model for the Center's students. Her speech is quite intelligible, though she was born hard-of-hearing and was profoundly deaf by the age of 16. She was a senior at Gallaudet College when she lost her eyesight in a snowmobile collision with a tree.

It was a stunning blow for the young woman. She wrote to Robert Smithdas and was put in touch with one of the Center's ten Regional Representatives - in California. Later she came to the Center in Sands Point to advance her training. Michelle attends Columbia Teachers College, where she is an A student working towards her masters degree. Knowing the demands of college and Cathy's dream of going to college, Michelle presses her student to become both skillful and speedy in the use of braille. Michelle is the teacher everyone wishes he had for his hardest subject.

As the two work together, Michelle leans



towards Cathy. Cathy, hungry for knowledge, rivets her attention on her teacher.

Michelle's eyes, unmarked by the accident, gleam encouragingly. Her face is lit up with a smile so encouraging that Cathy can sense it. The two seem to be a living tableau of the visually-impaired Anne Sullivan teaching the deaf-blind Helen Keller.

"Is Michelle a good teacher?" Cathy is asked later. The sign for "good" is to touch the fingertips to the mouth and bring the back of that hand into the palm of the other hand.

Cathy's reply is, however, such a vigorous smack of the hand into the palm that her answer really says, "GOOD!"

To be skilled in braille and develop the necessary sensitivity in the fingertips takes years. Cathy also worked regularly with Diana Vebares in the Communications Learning Center, using the closed circuit TV to greatly magnify the printed word. Cathy needs the words so large that only three or

four appear on the screen at a time.

Diana coached her in English - which for the deaf is a second language. American Sign Language is the language of the deaf, and the structure and syntax of ASL are completely different from spoken English. A deaf person might sign and think: "Me-go-store." The spoken or printed English would be: "I am going to the store." Because most deaf people have used ASL exclusively all their lives, the Center spends a lot of time and effort on teaching them English as a second language so that they can read and write.

There are also all the idioms, absent from ASL, that must be learned. Diana told her students one day that she was late because of "rubbernecking on the Long Island Expressway." The students needed an explanation. Diana said that it was hard work, but that Cathy was very dedicated and highly motivated to learn.

She plans to go to college, preferably

to Gallaudet College for the Deaf, and hold down at least a part-time job.

"I have no experience yet," Cathy admits. "First I must get skills. I enjoy studying. I have so much more to learn, and I know that. And I won't give up."

Her face and body become animated with a combination of enthusiasm and determination as she says this.

The Center set up work experiences for Cathy. For a while she folded towels for surgery at St. Francis Hospital. Cathy said that it wasn't much fun. She much preferred running the coffee shop for the Center's students during their morning break. Her job began with setting up the coffee urn, then getting the cash box. She greeted each student entering the coffee shop, took the order, supplied what was wanted and collected the money.

Cathy's people skills and empathy could be seen as she worked. She assisted those who had a problem by guiding them to a seat,

helping them avoid obstacles. She didn't get flustered when there was a rush of people all at once. Though she was intent on her work, she smiled a lot and obviously enjoyed it enormously.

"She's very outgoing and concerned about people," agrees Dennis Brady, Cathy's Rehabilitation Counselor. "If there's a problem, it's guaranteed Cathy will be there to help. If it's a communication problem, she'll try to assist.

"She's spunky," Dennis adds. "Her spirit helps with her disability. She doesn't give up. She questions; she challenges; she's skeptical." Miriam says these qualities made Cathy "a wonderful catalyst" in her problem-solving group.

Cathy was "the kid" of the group whose members may range up to their '40s and '50s. The group discusses attitudes and feelings, how to handle interactions and situations with others.

"She was so open and asked very direct



questions that get discussion going. And it helped her to hear from older people that they've had the same experiences she's had and to get empathy and support from them. Cathy's done a lot of maturing since she came to the Center," Miriam adds.

Outside school, Cathy enjoys making sweaters and is learning to make pom-pom animals. But her favorite activity is writing letters. She writes to many people. "They may not write back, but I always hope for an answer."

### SHE SEEKS OPPORTUNITIES FOR OTHERS

(Reprinted with permission of the ROCKY MOUNTAIN NEWS, Denver, Colorado).

by Marjorie Barrett

Nancy Rosen has a full-time job, maintains a home and edits a magazine. Just like thousands of other women - but not quite. Rosen is deaf and legally blind.

"The deaf-blind are educable, employable," says Rosen, editor of THE DEAF-BLIND

AMERICAN. "They just need the opportunity."

That's what Deaf-Blind Awareness Week is all about - educating the public.

The theme of this year's observance, "Coming of Age," focused on the more than 6,000 deaf and blind young men and women - victims of the 1960's rubella epidemic - who are ready to enter the work force.

"They will need jobs if they are to be useful members of the community," Rosen says. With today's technology, there are scores of jobs they can handle if just given the opportunity - everything from sheltered workshop assignments to teaching.

Rosen, for example, is with the Denver Commission on the Disabled. She dispenses information on the Associables (a Denver area social and support group for deaf-blind persons), on the American Association of the Deaf-Blind, on various Denver city services, and information in the DEAF-BLIND AMERICAN, a monthly, large-print magazine written by and for people who are deaf and/or blind.



Nancy Rosen works at the Denver Commission on the Disabled with the help of her dog, BJ, and Pat Stearman.

She helps with job placements, finds places to live - whatever individuals need. Rosen works with city and county agencies, identifying safety needs.

"A great deal needs to be done," she says.

An example: In the office building housing the Denver Commission on the Disabled, where many hearing-impaired employees work, the fire alarms in the building are

the audible type. They meet city codes, but Rosen and others are looking for some alternative alarm, perhaps blinking lights, to accommodate hearing-impaired workers.

Rosen, who grew up in Maryland, started out in regular school but soon was switched to special schools because of a congenital eye defect. Her eyesight seemed to come and go. By age 13, she also had nerve damage to



her ears.

Her hearing continued to deteriorate and by 1982 Rosen was profoundly deaf. She has sight only in one eye, but it is distorted and very limited.

She hopes Deaf-Blind Awareness Week will reach a great many parents of hearing-impaired children who should be warned to have those youngsters checked for Usher's syndrome. It is an inherited disease that causes both hearing loss and retinitis pigmentosa, a degeneration of the retina.

"Very often hearing-impaired children will learn to sign or read lips and then in their late teens or early 20's they will lose their sight," she says. "Then all of their training ends up not doing them much good."

If parents know early that children will face a life of blindness in addition to their hearing impairment, they can begin the education that will provide the tools needed to live in the sighted world of hearing people.



Rosen says she feels fortunate. Her deaf husband, who is confined to a wheelchair, provides the eyes when needed. She provides the legs. Her dog, BJ, provides the couple's hearing needs.

Maurine Tessler, Director of the Denver Ear Institute's Colorado Clearinghouse for the Hearing Impaired, says there are approximately 120 deaf-blind people in Colorado. Some of them were premature children who were given too much oxygen and many are multihandicapped.

### AVAILABLE NOW

The National Braille Press has produced a new guide to aids and devices useful to deaf-blind persons, compiled by Dr. J. M. Gill of Great Britain. The guide includes sources and prices for aids and devices currently available from various countries, a directory of services for the deaf-blind, and a survey of new developments

related to deaf-blindness.

The guide is obtainable from the National Braille Press for \$9.00 in print or braille. Requests for the guide should be addressed to:

Ms. Diane Croft

Director of Information Services

National Braille Press, Inc.

88 St. Stephens Street

Boston, MA 02115

### MACDONALD RECEIVES HONORARY DEGREE

Roderick J. Macdonald, President of the American Association of the Deaf-Blind, received the honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters from Western Maryland College, Westminster, Maryland, at its 116th commencement in May.

In a letter to Rod, Robert J. Chambers, President of the College, noted: "As you know, I am a great admirer of your person and your work. You are in

a word, a tremendous source of inspiration to all who know you.

"We at Western Maryland, of course, have taken special pride in our relationship with you, for we realize full well the great value of your work for the deaf-blind . . . you are certainly a very human hero, as your able and sometimes biting wit certainly shows. At bottom, you are, quite simply, an exceptional human being, a man we know well, and wish to know even better."

Dr. Macdonald is a member of the Advisory Committee of the Helen Keller National Center.

LOVE SONG

by Joanne Greenberg

If you were God I wonder  
Would you Sign to your deaf-blind:  
"One sense especially I will give.  
That sense is spelled upon your body  
Every ridge and curve,  
On the shut lids of blind eyes,  
In the caves of deaf ears,  
From the wind-lift of your hair  
To the floor side of your feet.  
It's not in a node, a bump, a hole,  
My Braille is feeling and the whole body reads  
Because the joy of it is much too much  
To hold in the hands alone."

Editor's Note: Joanne Greenberg is the well-known author of IN THIS SIGN and I NEVER PROMISED YOU A ROSE GARDEN. She is a friend of the editor, and deeply interested in all deaf-blind people.







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